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OR, "A CUTE CASE."

A Romance of To-day. To Which the Attention
of Metropolitan Police, and all Detectives,
is Respectfully Called.

BY EDWARD LYTTON WHEELER,
AUTHOR OF "DEADWOOD DICK" NOVELS, "ROSEBUD-
ROB" NOVELS, ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A RAILWAY ACQUAINTANCE.

A PASSENGER-EXPRESS train, leaving Philadelphia at 11 P. M., was flying along over its steel trail, toward New-York, one moonlit night, at the rate of thirty-five miles an hour, when a passenger, leaving the smoker, sauntered leisurely through the crowded cars.

He was of medium height, good figure, straight, square-shouldered, graceful of motion, and evidently somewhat muscular.

In face he was decidedly good-looking, though rather sun-and-weather tanned. He wore a graceful mustache of dark-brown color; his closely-cut hair was of a like hue, and his eyes were dark, keen and magnetic.

At a glance, he looked like a person who would be

THEN HE SUDDENLY APPEARED TO GROW EXCITED, AND GAZED AT DEADWOOD DICK MORE SHARPLY THAN AT FIRST. "WHERE DID YOU GET THIS?" HE DEMANDED.

a most pleasant friend, and equally a dangerous enemy.

His age was somewhere near thirty years. His habitual bright, free-and-easy expression, however, made him look even younger.

He was well-dressed, in a gray suit, and wore a soft-crowned hat, of like color, which sported a gold-headed cane; but there was nothing loud or "flashy" about his appearance.

This man was none other than he so famous to the readers of this LIBRARY, the redoubtable Deadwood Dick, the ex-outlaw, the detective, and the hero of many a thrilling adventure, now on an Eastern trip, for the first time since he was a lad.

The journey from the far West, to the point where we now meet him, had been very interesting, and he was nearing the great metropolis of North America, full of the anticipation of enjoyment of the sights he would see.

Shortly after the train's departure from the Quaker City he had gone forward to the smoker, leaving his baggage in his seat, presuming it would be safe; and after enjoying his cigar, he started on his return, leisurely, as if to study the faces of the passengers as he passed from car to car.

Arriving at the seat where he had left his grip, duster, and "traps" piled up, he was somewhat surprised to note that they had been removed to the basket above, and that the seat was occupied by a lady.

She was attired entirely in black, and wore a bonnet, from which fell a costly crape veil.

She was evidently a young lady, not yet out of her teens, and both petite and pretty of figure.

As Dick paused in the aisle, she half-arose, as if embarrassed.

"I hope you will pardon me!" she said, hesitatingly, and in a low tremulous voice, "but the other cars were so crowded, that I ventured—"

"No apology is necessary, madam!" Dick replied, with natural gallantry. "You are perfectly welcome to a share of the seat."

And without another word he sat down beside her.

The train flew on through the night, and it was not until after they had passed Trenton, that Dick and his lady companion fell into conversation, and he found that she was a clever conversationalist—quite voluble, too.

"Are you going to New York?" she asked, after they had chatted for some time.

"I am. This will be my first visit to the metropolis. I am from the West."

"Indeed! I have always wondered if the West was not a large place. And it happens so strange, too—this is my first visit to New York."

"Quite a coincidence, I am sure. You have relatives there, I presume?"

"Oh, no, sir! I do not know a person in all that great city. I am going on a very sad mission, sir."

"I am sorry to hear that. You have lost a relative, I infer."

"Yes, sir—my poor brother. He died in New York yesterday."

Then, without being invited, she went on and told her story.

It was substantially as follows:

She was Norine Norval, a factory girl of Philadelphia.

Her parents, poor people, had both died two years ago, and it had cost all they were worth to bury them.

There were only two children, Norine and Wallace, and after his parents' death, the latter had obtained employment as the valet of a New York gentleman, at whose house he had died.

Norine had been notified to come and take charge of the remains, and also, that there was an insurance on Wallace's life, of a hundred dollars, which would provide for his burial.

"If it had not been for it," she said, with perceptible emotion, "my poor brother would have been buried in the Potter's Field, for after paying my fare, ten dollars is all I had left in the world."

"You have my earnest sympathies!" Dick said.

"Thank you. I have so few to sympathize with me, that a kind word from any one is grateful. Such a time I've had, too, trying to get my ten-dollar bill changed—for I wouldn't dare to expose so much money in the streets of New York. I asked several ladies in the other car, but none could accommodate me, and I was too timid to ask the gentlemen."

"Why, I can accommodate you, I guess!" Dick said, drawing a large, well-filled pocket-book, from the inside pocket of his coat, and opening it. "Will dollar notes answer?"

"Oh! yes, sir. You are very kind."

And opening a little hand-bag she carried, Miss Norval extracted a well-worn ten-dollar note, and laid it in his hands.

From a pack of perhaps a hundred notes of large denominations, Dick at last fished out ten ones, and thus the exchange was effected, Miss Norval putting the bills into her bag, and Dick restoring his book to his pocket.

"What is the name of your brother's late employer?" he asked, awhile later, without any particular curiosity, more than to keep up the conversation.

"Colonel Dudley, sir. He is an old bachelor, is very rich, Wallace wrote, and lives at No.—Fourth avenue. He was formerly a merchantman, in the East India trade, I believe, but has now retired."

"Do you think you can find the place?"

"I shall not try, to-night. I think I shall not venture over to New York, to-night, but remain at some hotel, near the depot, at Jersey City, until morning."

"That would perhaps be advisable. You can then more easily be directed to your destination."

The conversation then lagged, and finally dropped off altogether.

At last arriving at Jersey City, Dick allowed Miss Norval to step out of her seat, while he stepped in, and secured his luggage.

Noticing a bluish scrap of paper, where she had sat, he picked it up, and thrust it in his vest pocket. Why he did so he could not, for the life of him, have told.

Miss Norval did not notice his act.

They left the train, said good-by, and Dick entered the ferry for Desbrosses street.

Here he took a cab, and was driven to the Metropolitan Hotel.

On arrival, he paid the cabman out of coin he had in his pocket, dismissed him, and entered the hotel office.

After registering as Fergus Fleming, of Denver, Colorado, he sought for his pocket-book, to place it in the clerk's safe for the night.

Fancy his astonishment to find that it was gone!

Instinctively he reached for his watch and chain. That, too, was gone!

Then, he made the discovery that his coat on the side holding the pocket-book, had been completely cut open.

His diamond scarf-pin alone remained intact!

CHAPTER II.

DICK RESOLVES TO PLAY DETECTIVE.

DEADWOOD DICK had, in his eventful career, been treated to many surprises, but he could remember none more so than in the present case, where he found that he had literally been "taken in and done for."

"By heaven! I have been robbed of my pocket-book and watch!" he gasped, feeling from pocket to pocket, in the vain hope of discovering the missing articles.

"Is this the first you knew of it?" mildly inquired the statuesque clerk with one eye-glass.

Dick shot him a glance of fury.

"Is it the first I knew of it? Why, you consummate ass, to be sure it is!"

"Tut, tut! No such language permissible about this establishment!" rebuked the clerk. "I dare say we cannot find it convenient to accommodate you."

"Oh! can't you? Now, look here, don't try to play any bluff with me in this game. Without the shadow of a doubt I can rake together enough cash to pay for my night's lodging, and to-morrow I will seek a more congenial hotel. Three dollars, did you say? All right. There's your money in hard stuff. So sail ahead, and land me in the worst room you have in the sky attic."

And fetching out a handful of loose coin from his pants' pocket, Dick counted out twelve silver quarters upon the counter.

Without further ado, the clerk rung for a call-boy, gave the order, and Dick was ushered away to the elevator.

Instead of being given the attic, however, he was conducted to one of the best sleeping apartments on the second floor above the office.

When left alone, he turned up the gas and sat down upon the edge of the bed, his face the scene of many contrasting expressions.

"Well, I'll be hung up by the neck if I ain't a pretty one!" he slowly soliloquized. "To think that Deadwood Dick should so easily get taken in and done for, upon his very advent in this city! I ought to go direct and ship myself back West in a cattle-car!"

It was plain the great Western Prince of Sports was thoroughly disgusted with himself.

"Now, let me see," he mused. "The last time I had my pocket-book out was while on board the cars, and when I changed the ten-dollar note for the girl, Miss Norval. If I remember right, I also had my watch at that time, too. Now, when we got off the cars, I was the last one out, and no one jostled against me, nor did any one jostle me on the ferry-boat. Who, then, was the adroit pickpocket—the girl? By heaven! she had an angel's face, and yet maybe that story about her brother was all bosh. If so, she was a clever actress, and an even cleverer professional thief."

Dick's coat proved to be slit on the very side that was next to Miss Norval, as they sat in the train.

The theft must have been committed after they ceased to converse, and he was deeply puzzled to know how he could have been so deliberately and systematically robbed when wide awake.

Yet robbed he was.

The truth could not be disguised.

By the loss of his pocket-book, he was out six hundred and fifty dollars, while his watch and chain were worth at least two hundred more.

Luckily that was not all the detective had brought along with him from the West.

Calamity Jane, with a wife's foresight, had sewed a five-hundred-dollar-bill in each lapel of his coat, and it now turned out to be lucky that she did so; otherwise Dick would practically have had no resources to fall back on, nor any immediate way of getting money, except by the disposal of his diamond pin.

That the girl whose acquaintance he had made on the cars had robbed him seemed very apparent, yet he was loth to believe one seemingly so innocent could stoop to such a crime.

The more he thought the matter over, however, the stronger grew the conviction that she had robbed him.

She had sought to have the bill changed.

This was but a subterfuge, for the purpose of learning where he carried his pocket-book, and to gain some idea of how much money he possessed.

She had worked the racket well, and without exciting his suspicions, and when he was directing his attention to some other part of the car, had cut his coat, relieved him of his pocket-book, and very likely, about the same time, secured his watch.

It was an act fully as clever as it was daring, and the one who accomplished it was surely no amateur at the business.

But about the cleverest part of the business, as it occurred to Deadwood Dick, was that his fair companion had lost herself so completely that there was little if any possibility of getting track of her.

While considering this fact, something flashed across the detective's mind—a recollection of picking up the scrap of paper from the seat of the railway coach.

What might this not be?

A clew perhaps to the identity of her who had robbed him!

Thrusting his fingers into his vest pocket, he drew forth the paper—or papers, rather, for there were three pieces.

One was a pawn-ticket, issued by Rosenthal, pawnbroker, No.—Bowery, New York, to Miss Malone, in the sum of twenty dollars, on deposit of a pair of diamond earrings.

Scrap number two contained the address:

"NORINE NORVAL,
1298 Jefferson Street,
Philadelphia,
Pa."

Scrap number three contained the address of Colonel Delos Dudley, which was "No.—Fourth Avenue, New York."

On the back of this latter scrap was also written in pencil, Number 2—Hester street.

A careful examination and consideration of these papers gave Deadwood Dick a clew.

On the morrow he would take up the trail, and though a total stranger in New York, he had reason to believe that he would learn something in regard to the clever pickpocket.

In the first place, he would learn what sort of a character Miss Norval of Philadelphia, was; then he would visit "Uncle Three-Balls" Rosenthal, and elicit what information he could concerning Miss Malone, who had "soaked" her, or somebody else's diamonds.

Next he would seek an interview with Colonel Delos Dudley and find out what he had to say.

So early the next morning he was up and took leave of the hotel, securing accommodations at another, not far distant, where was a branch Western Union telegraph office. This he at once utilized.

Two telegrams were sent.

One was addressed to the landlady of the house on Jefferson street, Philadelphia, where Norine Norval was supposed to live; the other was to the Chief of Police, of the same city.

The first was as follows:

"Does Norine Norval live at this number? How old, how dressed when last seen? Give general description of the person, her character, and so forth. "FERGUS FLEMING, Detective."

To the Chief of Police the message ran as follows:

"Find if Norine Norval lives at 1298 Jefferson street, and where she is supposed to be now, or has been in the last forty-eight hours. Also ascertain what sort of a name she bears—good or bad."

Within two hours answer to inquiry number one came back:

"Norine Norval boards here. Started for New York yesterday, for brother's remains. To return here. Working girl. Excellent character—none better. M. R."

The answer from Quaker City Police Headquarters was received by Deadwood Dick, an hour afterward:

"Such a person boards there. Is a mill girl, of good reputation. Is supposed to be in New York now, for purpose of bringing her brother's remains here."

After reading these answers, it may well be supposed that Deadwood Dick was surprised, but he went straight ahead at the work he had undertaken—a job that, as it grew older, seemed to promise some peculiar, if not startling developments.

Judging by the tone of the telegrams, it did not appear that the Philadelphia Norine Norval and the girl he had encountered on the train could be one and the same person; for the one had a reputation for honesty, while the other, Dick was satisfied, had robbed him.

What, then, was the mystery? for surely there was some mystery.

Dick was preparing to visit Rosenthal's pawnbroking establishment when another telegram was handed him.

This was from "M. R.," and was worded as follows:

"Norine Norval, when she left here, was dressed in a black cashmere suit, with crape bonnet and mourning veil. She is a person of trim figure, medium height, and very pretty. Has brown hair, dark expressive eyes, and pearly teeth. Age, eighteen. What has happened? Why is inquiry made?"

"M. R."

Dick put this telegram in his pocket with others. "Perhaps I will answer that question and perhaps I won't," he muttered. "I may be having all this trouble for nothing, but don't believe it. As sure's sugar is sweet, there's a screw loose somewhere, and I'm in for finding out where it is. I came here for recreation and amusement, and I reckon I can't find it better than to investigate this affair of an un-

sophisticated individual from the backwoods being taken in and done up in brown paper by a pretty metropolitan confidence 'mash.'

And with a grim smile, the "unsophisticated" Richard set out for the Bowery.

Arrived on this famous thoroughfare, he was not long in finding the money-lending establishment of Nathan Rosenthal, which was located in a commodious store, and had the appearance of being a place that catered to considerable patronage, for the windows were full of goods that were for sale, having at some time been pledged and not redeemed.

When Deadwood Dick entered the main office, he found himself in the presence of two persons, both of whom were evidently of Jewish birth.

One was the proprietor, for he occupied a position behind the counter, while the other stood before it in an attitude of listening. He was the younger of the two.

The elder man was short, fat and muscular, with a prodigious hook-nose, sparkling black eyes, and an expression of more than average intelligence.

He wore no collar or hat, and at a first glance appeared to be a very rough-and-ready sort of individual.

Between him and the man on the front side of the counter there was no particular resemblance, nor any indication that they were related to one another.

The younger man was sharp-featured, and as swarthy as a Spaniard, with bright, bead-like eyes and close-curling hair. He was tall and slenderly proportioned, fairly well dressed, and perhaps twenty-three years of age.

At Deadwood Dick's entrance, the pawnbroker was speaking Hebrew in very forcible tones, and emphasizing his remarks by bringing his weighty fist down upon the counter in no gentle manner.

It appeared evident that he was angered, and that the subject of his wrath stood before him.

Not understanding the Hebrew language, Dick could not, of course, know what was being said, but judged the remarks were anything but pleasant to the younger Israelite, for he finally stamped his foot with a snarl of defiance and left the store, slamming the door after him.

"Well, sir, what do you want?" the pawnbroker then demanded in good English, regarding the Westerner keenly.

"I called to get a little information, providing it was obtainable," Dick replied calmly, not at all disconcerted by the other's harsh tone. "Are you the proprietor of this place?"

"I am."

"As I supposed. I am a detective—Fergus Fleming, at your service. If I were to make a few inquiries would you find it convenient to answer them?"

"It depends entirely what they are, sir. While we are always ready to do what we can to be on the right side of the law, there are frequent instances where it is judicious and honorable for us to keep close-mouthed."

"Exactly. What I have to ask, however, does not particularly necessitate that you betray any of your private affairs. All I want is a description of the parties or party who were present when this pledge was made."

Dick here produced the pawn-ticket, and laid it upon the counter.

Rosenthal picked it up, carelessly, and glanced at the name.

Then he suddenly appeared to grow excited, and gazed at Deadwood Dick more sharply than at first.

"Where you get this?" he demanded—"where you get this? I pay you well to find out how you came by this ticket!"

The mystery in regard to the fair railway passenger was evidently not all yet explained.

CHAPTER III.

BEGINNING AT THE BEGINNING.

"You evidently remember issuing the ticket," Deadwood Dick observed, on perceiving the Jew's excitement.

"I do," was the reply. "How did you get it?"

"It fell into my possession by chance, and as I had some curiosity to find the whereabouts of the person to whom it was issued, I naturally came here first, premising, of course, that you might chance to know the party, or at any rate, might remember her, so as to be able to describe her."

"Well, I should say I could!" Rosenthal declared, vigorously. "If you encountered the one to whom that ticket was issued, you met one of the smartest female rogues in the business, and I'll bet if you had any valuables about you, when you first met her, you didn't have them when you parted company, sir!"

"You hit the truth that time!" Dick acknowledged, and then went on to narrate how the sorrowing (?) passenger had taken him in.

Rosenthal listened, his shrewd countenance wreathed in smiles.

"Just as I supposed," he said, as Dick concluded. "You may be a detective, Mr. Fleming, but Maggie Malone has fooled as smart people as you, before this, and you'll hardly find a metropolitan detective that she hasn't euchered, in one way or another."

"Can you describe her?"

"Well, perhaps, and perhaps not. She has numerous disguises, and wears them well. The one you met her in is her favorite, when working the railroads. The mourning racket generally arouses sympathy, and the money-changing game shows her her way to proceed. It isn't every victim that can be worked the same way, and thus she has to resort to

various subterfuges. She is a pretty young woman, is well educated, and in every sense up to the times."

"You evidently want to see her," Dick said, "judging by your offer to pay me well, in case I told you how and where I got the ticket."

"Well, I should smile! I'll tell you what she did. You saw the young man, who just went away?"

"I did."

"Well, that was my nephew, Isaac. He has been in my employ for several years, and is considered very smart. He is engaged to my daughter Ruth, and I give him my promise of advancement to partnership, when they get married. You see?"

"I comprehend."

"Well, Isaac he grow a little wild, like other young men, and he goes to some concert gardens, drinks wine, and talks with the ladies. These times he forgot about Ruth, you know. Well, it was in this way he meet this Maggie Malone, and she charmed him with her artless ways, and he meets her frequently. By and by, she comes here, when I was away, and wants money on pair of small diamond earrings. Of course Isaac accommodates her, with pleasure, and she gets twenty dollars and goes away. She also takes with her three hundred dollars' worth of watches what was in that showcase, for sale. She did not even so much as ask the price of them. She takes them, says 'good-by!' and Isaac sees no more of his new mash, afterward."

"Indeed! When did this occur?"

"One week ago."

"How did she get possession of the watches?"

"That is what I'll give ten dollars to find out. She did not break the showcase, and Isaac swears she was not behind the counter. She got the watches without his seeing her, right before his eyes, when he was writing the ticket."

"Very strange! Could she not have reached over the case, opened the door, and extracted the watches with a hook?"

"No. The doors of the case are supplied with patent catches, and can only be opened by a person familiar with their working."

"Then, indications would go to show that the woman must have known how to manipulate the catches, or else she did not get the watches without Isaac's knowledge."

"It would seem one way or the other."

"I suppose you turned the case over to the proper authorities?"

The Jew shook his head.

"No. I trust no such matters to the police," he said. "My daughter and myself stand high in society, and Isaac the same. If the matter gets into the newspapers, all New York would ring with it, and make my daughter ashamed to be seen. The Hebrew people keep their troubles to themselves pretty much."

"So I am aware. So you are not inclined to push the matter to an investigation?"

"Not openly. I tell Isaac he must find the thief and get the watches before he courts my daughter any more. Then, when I find the right man, who can do his work with a close mouth, I'll pay him for getting at the true facts of the case. See?"

"I understand. You want the matter quietly worked out, to the extent of finding whether or no your nephew is a thief, and had a hand in the watch robbery."

"Exactly."

"Well, sir, I'd like to take hold of the job. You understand that I have a personal interest in desiring to find this Malone woman, and I can as well handle the job twofold, as singly. I have had some experience in the detective line, and haven't a doubt but what I'd be the very man for your case."

"You're a stranger in New York?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. You'll not be very likely to succeed, then. You don't know the ropes."

"So much the better for not knowing them. The detectives who know the ropes are apt to be known by the crooks, themselves. A stranger—especially one with the touch of Westernism in him—would hardly be suspected of being a metropolitan detective."

"Well, there may be something in that. But, in a strange city, how would you go to work, with any degree of certainty, to find out that which you want to know, and do it quietly?"

"I could no more explain that to your satisfaction than you could or would betray the secrets of your trade!" Dick replied, dryly. "However, if you wish me to look up your part of the case I will undertake to do so. I mean to find the woman who robbed me, on my own hook."

"How much will you charge me?"

"Nothing, until I finish my work. Then, whatever is satisfactory to you, will be the same to me."

"Humph. I see you are a gentleman, and I give you the job, Mr. Fleming. You find out what I want to know and I'll pay you one thousand dollars."

"Very well. Now, all I want to begin with is the pawn-ticket, the address where Isaac boards or lives, and a look at your daughter."

"Why do you want to see my daughter?"

"For no other purpose than to memorize her looks so that, should I chance to meet her, hereafter, I would know where to place her."

"Very well. Here is the ticket. Isaac—his other name is Lowenstein—lives at No. — Broome street. I will summon my daughter."

He touched a call-bell that communicated with some other part of the establishment, and directly a young lady entered the store, by way of the rear door.

"Ruth, this was Mister Fleming," Rosenthal said, as she advanced. "My daughter, Mr. Fleming."

Dick acknowledged the introduction, gracefully, and beheld a trim, neatly-dressed young lady, of some eighteen years, who, although a pronounced brunette, bore no resemblance to the Hebrew race. Her features were purely of Anglo-Saxon cast, lit up by a brilliant pair of dusky eyes, that, at present, bore traces of recent weeping.

"Mr. Fleming is a detective, Ruth!" Rosenthal went on, following the introduction, "and will try to find out the facts, in a quiet manner, as regards the matter of the robbery, and whether or not Isaac was in any way criminally concerned in it."

Ruth bowed, and directed a pleading glance toward Dick.

"Oh! sir, I am sure you will find Isaac guiltless," she said. "He has always been so honest and upright, in his dealings with everybody, that it is a shame to accuse him of complicity in the robbery."

"Of course, it may appear so to you, Miss Rosenthal, and as this woman who was the principal in the affair bears such an unenviable reputation, it is to be hoped that we shall be able to clear Isaac of all blame, whatsoever," Dick responded.

Then, after a few words more, he took his departure.

He had fairly taken hold of the case, now, and meant to go through with it, if such a thing were possible.

He had found out about Miss Maggie Malone, and had not a doubt but what she was the identical person whom he had encountered on the train.

But, how about Norine Norval?

Here was the perplexing part of the matter.

It appeared that Norine Norval had started for New York, yesterday, to take in charge her brother's remains, but, how had it happened that the Malone woman, or girl, rather, was impersonating the alleged innocent Philadelphia factory girl?

Had she encountered her on the train, learned of her destination and the object of her journey, and taken the cue to get into Dick's confidence?

That was the theory that seemed most reasonable to Dick; and if such were the facts of the case, it was not improbable that something might be learned at Colonel Dudley's on Fourth avenue; either of one girl or the other.

So for the Colonel's residence, the Western Prince of Detectives set out.

CHAPTER IV.

MISS BLONDEY MEHAGAN.

FOURTH AVENUE, so far as Deadwood Dick's knowledge of New York went, might have been fully as aristocratic a street as Fifth avenue, but once he reached the street he found out the difference.

By referring to the paper containing Colonel Delos Dudley's address, and following the street numbers, he finally located the place where the aforesaid Dudley was supposed to hang out.

It proved to be a lager-beer saloon on the ground floor, the windows of which were profusely adorned with variety theater lithographs.

Over the saloon were two stories, communicating with which was a side, or "private" entrance.

After locating the place, Deadwood Dick lingered about the neighborhood for some time, ostensibly looking in shop windows, but in reality deliberating as to his best and safest mode of action.

He rightly argued that it would not be policy for him to go to making too free inquiries after Colonel Delos Dudley, until he had gained some insight into the Colonel's character.

The building was evidently a tenement, and the name on the beer sign was not Dudley, by any means.

If Dudley was a retired merchantman, in independent circumstances, it hardly looked likely that he lived in such humble surroundings, unless, mayhap, he owned the premises, and had a suit of apartments reserved for his individual accommodation. "Mike O'Mehagan" was the autograph printed on the beer sign, and judging by the persons who entered or left Mike's place, his custom was not highly respectable, and Dick concluded that it would not be a bad idea to keep away from O'Mehagan's, until he had learned something of the character of the resort.

Directly across the street was a saloon kept by one Antonio Phazzi, an Italian.

Knowing the doubtful love of the sons of Erin for the sons of Sunny Italy, and vice versa, Deadwood Dick finally entered Phazzi's saloon.

Inside, light was a thing nearly excluded, and the room was small and foul smelling.

A short bar was presided over by a rather attractive looking young Italian, plainly American born.

A half-score of rough-looking male and female "bums" were crowded about a couple of tables, sipping their beer or wine; but much to Dick's relief, they paid little or no attention to his entrance.

The general look of the place and its patrons was not favorable, and Dick was not anxious to be noticed too closely by that crowd.

The bartender, however, had a more respectable and honest look than the others.

After imbibing a glass of "pop," presuming that would be about the most unadulterated article the house afforded, Dick made bold to inquire:

"Have you resided in this neighborhood long, Mr. Phazzi?"

"I am located here two years," was the reply, in good English.

"Ah! Yes. Then perhaps you can give me the information I require. I am in search of a retired seafaring man, one Colonel Delos Dudley, whom I

have heard lives somewhere in this vicinity. You may have heard of him, as I believe he is a man of wealth, and a bachelor."

"I have seen him!" Phazzi said, rather grimly. "As for his being wealthy, I have my doubts about that, for, at any rate, if he is wealthy or not, he don't trouble himself about paying his rum-bills. He used to come here, until his bill got large—then he went across to Mehagan's."

"Indeed! Can you tell me if he is in any business whatever?"

"About his main business is looking out for his stomach and his rum, and getting out of paying for it."

"There's Blondey, though. If you're after pointers, she will give 'em to you if she happens to be in the mood—a decent girl, by the way, sharp as a razor, but too fond of her thirst to let it suffer. Hi! there, Blondey!"

One of the women arose from the tables, and came to the bar, somewhat unsteadily.

"What's the matter with you, Tony?" she demanded, laying down a pair of fists upon the bar that were somewhat prodigious, considering her sex.

"Why, Blondey, here's a man, and there's a drink in him. He wants to know about the 'Colonel.' Do you understand?"

Blondey, with a pair of eyes considerably beared, wanted to know, judging by her scrutiny of Dick, what he might want of Dudley.

"What do you want of the Colonel?" she gruffly demanded.

"Oh! I was just looking up the chap—seeing what he was doing these days, and if there was any likelihood of getting any money out of him," Dick answered, off-handedly.

"Money?" Blondey echoed. "You hadn't ought to be hard up, w! that pin. I'll bet the Colonel couldn't raise a red. His friends are gettin' scarce, too. No wonder. He never pays a loan."

"Indeed! Why, I heard he was rich."

"Rich? About the richest I ever know'd him, was when he won a big pot at poker—two thousand—off a Coney Island chap. He made that look sick 'fore the day was out."

"What's become of his valet?"

"His what?"

"His valet—his private servant."

Blondey took time to put her hands to her sides, which shook with uproarious laughter, and when the latter had subsided, she looked inquiringly at Phazzi.

"He must mean Jack eh?" she inquired.

"I presume so," Phazzi nodded. "You mean the Colonel's 'prentice, sir?"

"Possibly—Wallace Norval, I refer to."

"That was Jack's t'other name," said Blondey, addressing her remarks to Phazzi.

Dick heard, and understood.

He was on the track!

To find out more, the easiest way would be to get Blondey's friendship, and there was a plain way to do that.

Her flushed face spoke of her unconquerable passion for strong drink. Some downslide in life had precipitated her to the condition in life she now occupied; and while not debauched beyond the craving of liquor, she was unable to reinstate herself to the position and confidence she had once enjoyed, and thus nothing was left her but the association of spirits more congenial than the worldly encounters of the street beggar.

For Dick to treat freely was his best or only course, and he did so, and then proceeded to learn from Blondey what might be beneficial to him.

"Did you know Jack?" Dick inquired.

"Yes—that is, I've seen him. You see, I and Mehagan, across the street, used to be brother and sister. Our parents died, and everything went to Mike, and I had to get. I was turned out of a winter's night and came here. Phazzi had always known me to be a decent girl, and spoke to his wife, and she took me in. I failed to get work, tho' I tried hard enough, and finally I took to drinking, and all I had in jewelry and clothes, 'cept a few, went. Tony has been a good friend to me, 'deed he has, and so has his wife."

And here there was a perceptible tear in the girl's eye, which showed that all the good had not left her.

"But, what has this to do with Dudley?" Dick demanded, a trifle suspicious that he was being taken for a "slow."

"It was here I first met him," Blondey declared. "The b'aste insulted me once, and Tony put him out. He went across to Mike and told him a plausible story, I suppose, and he took him in. I watched 'em afterward, and know about as much as any girl on the avenue knows about the man."

"And what you know I want to know," Dick said, advisingly. "It won't cost you a penny for telling, and you will gain a penny by speaking. I want to know who and what Delos Dudley is, how he earns his living, where he spends it, what has become of 'Jack' Norval, and sundry other particulars."

"What will you give to know?"

"Nothing that can be converted into drink. I understand you and your passion. I need not inquire what brought you to it—some misstep, surely. Out of grace, out of heart, it was with you. Give me the particulars I want to know and I will provide you a pleasant home, where home like surroundings will wean you from what is now dragging you down, step by step, to a fate you perhaps do not yet anticipate. You have but to say the word, and I am ready to perform all I have promised."

There were tears in Blondey's eyes as she listened. Perhaps Dick's urgent appeal would not, however,

have scored a victory but for the fact that Antonio Phazzi put forth his hand, earnestly.

"You are a noble man!" he said. "May all the powers help you."

Then, laying his hand on Blondey's shoulder, he said:

"Go! We have been good to you—at least as good as we could be, considering our surroundings. Your path is straight now; go with this man and do as he says. He is no padrone, but an honorable gentleman."

The girl cast a searching glance at Deadwood Dick, with her tearful eyes, but he checked what words he might have uttered.

"You will remain here without drinking for an hour," he said, "during which time I will send a cab, containing a lady who will fit you out in such attire, as you may need, to make your appearance more presentable. Then, you are to go whither you are conveyed, and there, I will question you for what I wish to know. You will then be waited upon by a physician, who will prescribe for your needs, until you feel once more yourself. So, Mr. Phazzi, you understand?"

"I do," the Italian replied, heartily.

And after shaking hands with both Deadwood Dick took his departure.

Surely another phase of his adventure in New York had developed, and one that he had by no means anticipated. If women continued to crowd themselves forward, a queer complication was not far ahead.

CHAPTER V.

THE CASE GROWS MORE KNOTTY.

THE matter of arranging for Blondey Mehagan consumed the next several hours of Deadwood Dick's time, but he at last had the satisfaction of seeing her installed in a cosy room at a moderate-priced, down-town hotel, neatly attired, and scarcely like the girl he had taken from the rum-hole.

She was very nervous when Dick visited her, however, and was evidently suffering for a drink.

By kind words, and giving her to understand that he considered her entirely able to succeed in her new resolve, he soon caused her to forget her nervous dread, and the subject of Colonel Delos Dudley was broached.

"He is a bad man," she said, energetically. "There is not a good point about him, sir. More than that, he's no colonel at all. I don't know how he got the title, but sure he's been known in and about Chatham street and the Bowery since he was a boy."

"Then he's not rich?"

"No more than I am—tho' it's rich I now consider myself in findin' such a friend as you. No, Dudley's not rich. Sometimes he makes a haul of money in a doubtful way; then he's in clover, sure, an' ye'd think he owned all Fourth avenue. Mebbe you'll see him 'soakin' his watch, a day or two afterward."

"Then, he doesn't make his money on the square?"

Blondey smiled significantly.

"I should say not," she observed. "I know of a number of crooked transactions he's been in, but it ain't well to tell all one knows."

"How about the character of your brother's place?"

"It's gettin' worse and worse every day. Sure, when the old folks were livin' things had to run respectable, but Mike's a bad man, an' the only pity is they didn't keep him at Blackwell's Island when they had him there. Sure, there's not a man patronizes his place that's above sticking you wid a knife if he thought you had a plenty of money. And Doc Dudley is the chief cook-and-bottle-washer of the lot. He gets the name of 'Doc' more often than he does 'Colonel,' you see."

"Does Dudley lodge at Mike's?"

"He has a room there, but he more often rooms at Number 2—Hester street, which is also a 'fence.' Dudley does the 'confidence' act, sometimes, and often runs a stranger into the Hester street place, and cleans him out of his valuables."

"Indeed! Well, what about young Norval?"

"I don't know so awful much about him. He came on from Philly, something like two years ago, and he and Dudley peared to hitch up as mates. They were generally together, and always seemed on good terms. I always believed, however, that Dudley had some evil influence over him, for although he was a wild sort of dare-devil, I never saw anything actually bad in him, except what he was encouraged to."

"Well, where is he now?"

Blondey looked thoughtful for a moment, and evidently hesitated to betray this point.

"I don't think anybody exactly knows," she finally said, "unless it is me. Jack has not been seen about for a couple of days."

"You see, a house was robbed the other night up-town, and two men were arrested in the act, and are now on the Island for a good stiff term. From the best information I can get one of the men was Jack. At any rate the descriptions tally."

"But, the name—"

"Oh! of course that was assumed—Robert Buchanan, I believe it was. He's no fly crook who cannot manufacture another name than his own, when he gets pulled in."

Dick did not ask any further questions just then, but remained some minutes in silent deliberation.

He had learned considerably more than he had expected; but the mystery of Norine Norval was by no means cleared up yet. If anything, it was growing deeper all the time.

It was certainly a case that must have needs puzzled the most skillful detective.

Norine Norval had started yesterday for New York, to take charge of the remains of her brother. Question: What train had she started on?

Deadwood Dick, en route from the Quaker City to New York, had met a young woman on the train answering somewhat to Norine Norval's alleged description, but who, from further inquiry, appeared to be a notorious thief and confidence woman. This woman must have known of, heard of, or been acquainted with Norine Norval, to have been possessed of the knowledge that Norine Norval was bound for New York, after her brother's body, for she had mentioned "Colonel" Dudley; she had said Wallace Norval was Dudley's valet, and without doubt had dropped the pawn-ticket and other papers which had fallen into Deadwood Dick's possession.

It further appeared, from Blondey Mehagan's testimony, that Dudley was a blackleg, and instead of being his valet, Wallace Norval was really his partner in crime; that, instead of being dead, Norval was in prison.

The Malone woman, on the train, had mentioned that there was an insurance on Wallace Norval's life which would be sufficient to bury him.

Was not the insurance more?

Upon this very point was there not hinged a new plot or scheme of villainy?

The case presented many perplexing questions; and as Deadwood Dick reflected, he decided that Norine Norval, of Philadelphia, had received notice of her brother's death, and that there was an insurance on his life; that she had set out for New York to reclaim his body; that, on the way, she had met another young lady dressed in mourning—the one an innocent, the other a sharper—and, naturally solicitous of sympathy in her affliction, had begun a conversation with mourner Number Two, explaining who she was, where she was going, what for, and, in fact, giving all the particulars of the case; then Number Two, on the lookout for victims, and, naturally, an opportunity to rob them, had taken advantage of the Philadelphia girl's simplicity, bled herself to another car and set her snare, which had caught its game as she had intended it should.

It appeared in connection with this theory, that Norine really believed her brother to be the valet of one Colonel Dudley, a retired seafaring man. Likewise, it appeared that, according to Blondey Mehagan, "Jack" or Wallace Norval being in prison, Dudley must have sent the notice to the Philadelphia Norine of her brother's death, requesting her to come on.

Here, dropping the Malone woman out, arose a series of questions:

Was Wallace Norval at Blackwell's Island?

If so, was he dead?

Had he an insurance on his life of one hundred dollars, or more—perhaps thousands?

Had Dudley lured Norine Norval to New York for some villainous purpose in connection with the insurance?

If so, where was the genuine Norine Norval at the present time?

Leaving Maggie Malone in: were Maggie and Dudley acquainted, and was there a plot between them?

If not, with all her practical shrewdness, would not Maggie herself seek to inquire into the particulars of the case?

Again, if Maggie did not know Dudley, how did it happen that, on the back of the scrap of paper containing "Colonel" Dudley's address, was the number "2—Hester street," which according to Blondey Mehagan, was a 'fence,' and a place frequented by the man, Dudley?

■ All these thoughts and questionings did not occupy many minutes in going through Deadwood Dick's mind, during which time Blondey was watching him, curiously—more admiringly than otherwise, perhaps.

She was really a rather prepossessing girl, the more one gazed at her, and gifted with more intelligence than those with whom she had latterly associated.

Dick was satisfied of this, and also satisfied that Miss Blondey Mehagan was so shrewd and knowing, that, at this early stage of her reform, it would not be advisable to let her into the case he was endeavoring to work up.

So, after asking her a few more questions, and promising to see that she was provided for, as long as she remained quiet and kept her promise not to drink, he took his departure.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRY.

By this time, it was early evening.

Although fatigued with his labors of the day, Dick considered that it was incumbent on him to go ahead, regardless of fatigue.

Norine Norval's very life might be in peril.

But, what way should he turn? what step first take?

First he must know more positively what he wanted—know all about Norine, and so begin at the very beginning, and to do this he must visit Philadelphia, that was certain. To decide with him was to act, and with but slight preparations he set forth, and caught the eight-o'clock train at Jersey City, and arrived at Broad-street station, three hours later.

Of course it would seem then too late to proceed with his work, but on inquiry, finding that Jefferson street was not many minutes' ride, he hired a coupe for Twelfth and Jefferson; alighting at the corner, he took a walk through Jefferson street, from Twelfth to Thirteenth, and was favorably impressed with the perfectly respectable character of the locality.

The house Deadwood Dick was looking for, proved

to be a three-story brick. A light gleaming through the front parlor window, showed that some one was still up, despite the lateness of the hour, so, without much hesitancy Dick rung the bell.

The summons was answered by a stout, elderly lady, of motherly mien, who was dressed in a flowing wrapper, and looked directly over the top of her spectacles.

"I would like to see the lady of the house, on important business!" Dick announced, in his politest way.

"I am the lady," was the reply, "but I am sorry to say that I haven't room for any more boarders, at present, sir."

"That speaks well for your establishment, ma'am, but it chances that I am not in search of board. I came from New York to prosecute inquiries about Norine Norval."

"Oh!" the landlady said, with a longer breath. "Why, step right inside."

They were soon seated in a cosily furnished parlor, and the lady, whose name proved to be Mrs. Rothven, said:

"Why, what is the trouble about Norine? I received a telegram, and then a policeman came here and made inquiries about her. It has worried me a great deal."

"Well, that is what I am trying to find out. Things have come to my notice which have given me reason to suppose that the young lady has been lured to New York for wrongful purposes. Therefore, I have come here to get at the beginning of the matter."

"Did you telegraph me, and the Chief of Police of this city?"

"I did. I then proceeded considerably in my search, and came to the conclusion that I would do better to come here first."

"I am glad you did. Any information I can give you I will gladly offer."

"I infer that you keep a boarding-house, and that Norine Norval is one of your boarders."

"Yes, sir."

"How long has she resided here?"

"Ever since her parents died. I knew her people, you see, and naturally she seemed like a relative to me, and I took her in."

"Of what did her parents die?"

"Of fever, sir—typhoid fever."

"There were two children?"

"Yes, sir—Norine and Wallace."

"Do you know their ages?"

"Norine is past eighteen, and Wallace about a year or thirteen months younger."

"When, and under what circumstances, did Wallace go to New York?"

"He went about two years ago—about a month, I think, after his parents died. He saw an advertisement in a New York paper, of a valet being wanted at so much per week, and being out of work, and ambitious to help himself, he borrowed the money of me, and went over and got the job."

"Did he repay the loan?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know who he went to work for?"

"Yes, sir—Colonel Delos Dudley, of—Fourth avenue. He was a very rich bachelor, who formerly had been a seafaring man—a merchantman, I guess you call it."

"Did Wallace communicate with his sister, after entering Dudley's service?"

"Oh, yes—until about three months ago, since when Norine heard nothing of him, up to the time she got the telegram that he was dead."

"Norine bears an excellent reputation, I understand."

"Indeed she does. There's not a better girl in the city, in all respects, than she is, if I do say it—and I have daughters of my own."

"When did she receive notice of her brother's death?"

"Yesterday noon."

"By telegram?"

"Yes, sir."

"What name was signed to the telegram—or, still better, have you got it?"

"No, sir; Norine took it along. It was signed 'D. D.' and I suppose that meant Delos Dudley."

"Did you see the telegram?"

"Yes, sir."

"Can you recall how it was worded?"

"I think it read this way: 'Your brother dead. Come for his body. Insurance enough to bury him.'"

"Did Norine know of this insurance before?"

"No, sir."

"You do not, then, know the amount?"

"No, sir."

"What time did Norine start for New York?"

"I cannot tell you exactly what train she took. She left here for the depot late in the afternoon, but I believe she had some shopping to do yet, before she went aboard the cars."

"Did she carry much money with her?"

"No, sir. I don't think she could have had more than fifteen dollars."

"Has this young lady a lover, or any one she keeps company with?"

"There is a young man who is employed in New York, who comes over every other Sunday to see her. I don't know if they are engaged or not."

"His name?"

"Her Ingram."

"Do you know where he is employed, or resides?"

"I don't know his address, but I think he is employed in a steamship office at Jersey City."

"What sort of a person was Wallace Norval before he went to New York?"

"Very quiet, although I think he possessed a tendency to be easily persuaded."

"Have you a photograph of him, or his sister?"

"I have one of both. Would you like to see them?"

"I would."

Mrs. Rothven arose, entered an adjoining room, and soon returned with an album, in which, on opening, she exhibited cabinet photographs of the brother and sister.

"Wallace's was taken six months ago, and Norine's only recently!" Mrs. Rothven explained.

Deadwood Dick scrutinized the photographs, for several minutes, closely.

Norine somewhat resembled the girl of the train episode, but did not have quite so vivacious expression of countenance, although she was very pretty and modest looking.

Wallace was rather a jocular-appearing young man, beardless and pleasant. There was nothing about the appearance of his face to indicate that he was predisposed to evil.

"I would like to retain these photographs, until I can have duplicates of them completed," Dick said, after examining them.

"I have no objection to letting you have the pictures, sir, but I must have some reason for your wanting them. As you must know, I am anxious about Norine, all of which has been brought about by the inquiries about her."

"Well, I can disclose nothing until I secure your solemn promise to keep secret whatever I may tell you. I have taken hold of what promises to be a hard case to unravel, and must therefore govern my procedure with extreme caution."

"You can rest assured that whatever you tell me, I will keep secret, sir."

With this assurance, Dick made known his adventure on the railway car, and the motives that had thus far led him on from point to point in the case.

Mrs. Rothven was very much surprised and concerned, but could give little or no other information than what she had already imparted.

She was positive that Norine was honest, upright and respectable, and that she would be the last one to do what the Malone woman evidently had done.

So after cautioning Mrs. Rothven to absolute secrecy, Deadwood Dick took his departure.

There was no room for doubt, now, but what there was a heinous plot on foot, and that Norine Norval was, to a certain extent, the victim, and "Colonel" Delos Dudley the chief conspirator.

The three first things to do, that occurred to the Western detective, was, respectively, to interview Wallace Norval, if he could be found; to shadow "Colonel" Dudley, and, if possible, find out what had become of the real Norine; and to find out what company Wallace Norval's life was insured in.

After this, there would be time to look up the matters of Maggie Malone and Isaac Lowenstein.

Accordingly, Deadwood Dick went back to Broadway station, and took the 8:20 A. M. train for New York, arriving there in time to snatch a couple of hours' sleep before proceeding with his work.

CHAPTER VII.

WALLACE NORVAL.

To find out what he wanted to know about Wallace Norval, Dick must needs visit the Rogues' Gallery of New York, and also Blackwell's Island.

The Rogues' Gallery was accessible to all, but to reach Blackwell's he must have authority—must be a lawyer, an officer of the law, or have some particularly powerful reason to visit that prison, on an inquiry after one person, and necessarily would require a pass, or permit from the warden.

He applied personally to Inspector Byrnes, stating that he was looking for a missing man, and had reason to believe that one "Robert Buchanan," incarcerated at Blackwell's, was the party he was in search of.

It was Byrnes's "busy" day, and after Dick had produced Wallace Norval's photograph, and answered several shrewdly-put questions, he was placed in charge of a detective, empowered to show him the Gallery, and, if necessary, secure him a visit to the Island.

A search of the records occupied an hour's time, and then there was no difficulty in locating "Robert Buchanan's" visage among the largest collection of criminal "mugs" in the Americas.

Buchanan, according to the records, had been convicted of burglary—caught in the act—as had his co-partner, William Willis.

The detective then, after some questioning, procured Dick the permit, and together they visited Blackwell's Island.

Dick had not expected the detective to accompany him, and therefore found it necessary to become somewhat confidential, although not too much so, and gave the New York sleuth (Sperrin), a dim outline of the case.

Reaching Blackwell's Island, they obtained admission to the ward where "Robert Buchanan" was confined, and the detective so arranged that they were admitted to Buchanan's cell.

The young man was but little changed from the photograph Dick had of him, except that he was less robust of appearance.

Dick proceeded to question him.

Yes, he had formerly lived in Philadelphia; had a sister named Norine; admitted this after some little hesitation, coupled with anxiety—evidently for the girl.

He had come to New York, to answer an advertisement of one Colonel Dudley. His expectations had not been realized, as far as Dudley was concerned. The advertisement had intimated that Dudley was a rich, retired ocean merchant, who wanted a valet, but Dudley had proven to be a man who made his living by anything but honest ways.

Why, then, had he advertised for a valet?

In order to secure a lad whom he could train to his own dishonest profession, and thereby derive a profit from his pilferings.

So bright were the pictures and brilliant the promises concerning this sort of life, and so persuasive the arguments he made, that young Norval had been induced to become an apprentice.

The first action of the "Colonel" had been to connect him with a daring burglary.

Once the step was taken, Norval was warned that he would be killed if he backed out of wickedness, so he went on, and finally had been arrested and convicted.

Why had Dudley not been arrested?

Because he was a hard man to find at any time, and was not directly connected with the job for which young Norval had been arrested.

"Did he know the burglary was to be perpetrated, and by whom?" Dick inquired.

"He did. It was Dudley who proposed it. He was to receive a part of the profits."

"Then he was really the principal. Why did you not cause his arrest?"

"Because I was afraid to. He is at the head of a powerful clique of rogues, and the penalty of one who gets snapped up and gives the others away is death, when he comes out of prison."

"Can you solemnly swear that this penalty has ever been enforced during the time you have known Dudley?"

"I cannot. I am not aware that any one has turned traitor, although one fellow disappeared, and I never saw or heard anything of him afterward."

"And now, concerning another matter," Dick pursued. "Have you ever had your life insured?"

"Yes; but why all this questioning?"

"Because I am a detective, and have reason to believe your sister in great peril."

Norval looked startled.

"Does she know I am here?" he faltered.

"No."

"Then how comes it you know or suspect she is in trouble?"

"It matters not. Certain circumstances have caused me to infer as much. If you cannot afford me such information as may enable me to look up your sister and rescue her from peril, our interview is at an end."

"Why, of course I'll tell you anything that won't tend to put a longer sentence on my head. What do you want to know?"

"When was this insurance policy on your life taken out?"

"About six months ago."

"By whom?"

"By myself."

"Who payable to, in case of your death?"

"My sister—Norine."

"Was it taken out in your original name?"

"Yes."

"What sum?"

Dick was now jotting down notes on a memorandum pad.

"Five thousand dollars."

"Were you influenced to do this?"

"To some extent. The Colonel said that it was uncertain, in our business, when a man would lose his life, so I'd better look out for my sister. I thought so, too, and so scraped together all the money I could and had the policy taken out and the dues on it paid one year in advance."

"Where is this policy?"

"The Colonel has it. He said I'd better let him have it, as he had more influence to get out of scrapes than I, and should I get popped over, he would see that Norine got the money."

"And knowing that he was a chief of rogues, you did this?"

"I trusted him because he always did the square thing with me."

"Did you ever know a confidence woman named Maggie Malone?"

"Well, I should smile! She's a cute one!"

"Does she know Dudley?"

"Yes. She's his wife. I've heard hinted; but they don't live together, although they always appear on good terms, when they meet."

"Where does Malone hang out?"

"I don't know."

"Sure?"

"Yes, I am 'sure.'"

"Do you know Blondy Mehagan?"

"Some. I never took any stock in her. She'd squeal on any one."

This summed up Deadwood Dick's inquiries.

He had gone as far as he wanted to, in Sperrin's presence.

He was not anxious that the New York detective should interest himself in the case.

And so, after a few more words, Dick and his guide took their departure, and returned to New York.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER ISAAC.

RETURNING to the city, Dick went at once to his room at the hotel, to decide upon further proceedings.

After some deliberation, he visited the office of the Board of Health, and examined the death records, beginning a couple of weeks back, and then following forward.

Sure enough, it appeared that, just one week before, one Wallace Norval had died, at No. 2—Hester street, of diphtheria, at the room of his friend, Delos Dudley. One Doctor Aymar, of Third avenue, had handed in a certificate of death and taken out a burial certificate, and therefore of course no inquest was held.

He next hunted up Doctor Aymar, whom he found to be a pleasant sort of a gentleman, aged thirty.

In answer to Dick's inquiry about young Norval's death, he said:

"Yes, I attended the young man, for four or five days prior to his death. He died of diphtheria, and I took out a permit according to the facts."

He spoke so candidly, that Dick could not do otherwise than believe him.

"Did you know this young man's name before he died—that is, did he tell you his name, himself?"

He looked at his visitor inquiringly.

"Well, no!" he replied. "The patient was so low when I was called in, that he did not speak or recognize any one. Dudley, who was constantly beside him, told me his name, and I took it for granted that he spoke the truth, having no reason to think otherwise."

"Did he have any other attendants except Dudley and yourself?"

"None that I am aware of."

"What sort of a house is it, this 2—?"

"A tenement, with a good many rooms, and a family to nearly every room, I should say."

"Where is Dudley's room located?"

"On the third floor, back."

"He was buried—"

"At some cemetery on Long Island."

After thanking the physician for what information he had elicited Dick took his departure.

He was now resolved upon a further purpose.

He would find Isaac Lowenstein, and work him.

So, to No. — Broome street, he made his way, and found it to be a quiet-appearing, three story residence.

Ring the bell, his summons was answered by a neatly-attired young lady, evidently of Jewish descent.

"Is Mr. Isaac Lowenstein in?" Dick politely asked.

"No, sir, he is not," was the answer.

"Do you know when he will be in?"

"Not before late in the evening, I presume. He only has his breakfast and lodging here."

"Ah! Then could you tell me where I might perhaps find him—any resort of his?"

"Why, he works at Nathan Rosenthal's pawn-broking establishment, I believe."

"But he has been discharged, and is no longer there."

"Indeed! Then, the only place I know that you would be likely to find him, is the Palm Garden, on East Fourteenth street, near the Academy of Music. He occasionally drops in there."

"The Palm Garden, eh? Thank you."

And then Dick tipped his hat and departed.

Making his way to the vicinity of the Academy of Music, he discovered the Palm Garden.

In the evening the place is devoted to lager beer and orchestra music, while in the daytime beer holds undisputed sway.

A score or more persons, of either sex, were lounging about the concert hall when Deadwood Dick entered, and among them the detective was elated to discover the object of his search.

Young Lowenstein was seated at a table, engaged in the perusal of a morning paper, and did not appear oblivious of his surroundings. He was more fashionably dressed than when Dick had seen him before.

Lighting a cigar at the bar, Dick approached and took a seat across the table from the young Jew.

Isaac looked up quickly, with a slight start, and surveyed the detective suspiciously.

"Good-morning, Lowenstein," Dick accosted, affably. "What's all this trouble between you and Rosenthal?"

Isaac scowled.

"What's that your business?" he demanded, surlily.

"A very considerable, Isaac, my boy. I am a detective, and have the authority, if I choose to exercise it; so, it won't pay you to be quite so gruff, you see."

"Well, what do you want?"

"I want a straightforward and honest explanation of this matter."

"About the robbery?"

"Exactly."

"You'll have to go to some one else besides me, then. All I can tell you is that a woman came in and wanted money on a pair of diamond earrings."

While I was examining them, she, in some inexplicable manner, perpetrated the robbery."

"You do not know how it was done?"

"I have not the slightest idea."

"You didn't help her to the watches?"

Lowenstein flushed angrily.

"I did not," he declared, with emphasis, "and it's an insult, on the part of Rosenthal, to accuse me of such a thing."

"Rosenthal says the show-case doors could not be opened by any one from in front of the counter, nor by any person not understanding the lock. Is this true?"

"It is."

"And no glass was cut from the case?"

"None."

"Then how could the watches have been lifted without your knowledge?"

"I do not know," the young Jew replied, dejectedly. "I only know I was not concerned in the robbery."

"Would you swear to this?"

"Most certainly I would."

"You knew this woman who perpetrated the crime?"

"I had met her before; but I am not sure she did the job. There were at least a dozen customers in that day before the robbery was discovered. Some

one of them may have done it when I was looking up pledges."

"Were you aware that this Maggie Malone was a desperate thief and pickpocket?"

"Not until uncle told me so, when he heard of the robbery."

"You were in the habit of meeting the woman?"

"Sometimes we met by chance, and chatted and drank wine together."

"And she won your affections from Ruth?"

"By no means. I think as much of Ruth as I ever did. A young man, you know, is rather wont to enjoy gay company now and then. Ruth is always more serious than gay."

"Did you ever accompany Maggie home?"

"Once."

"Where to?"

"No. 2—Hester street."

"Have you seen her since the robbery?"

"No."

"Where do you usually meet her?"

"Sometimes here."

"Then you are expecting her now?"

"No. She never comes in daytime."

Deadwood Dick drummed on the table a moment, thoughtfully.

Young Lowenstein had answered his questions so frankly that he found it hard to believe him guilty.

However, it would not do to admit that.

"Well, Isaac," he said, after a pause, "I suppose it is my duty to arrest you; I suppose you are aware that if you were taken before a magistrate things would go hard with you."

"Maybe they would, sir. I don't know."

"There's no doubt but what they would. The very face of the case criminate you. Now, on the other hand, would it not be better to your interests to make an open confession to your uncle, to the effect that you were fascinated by this dangerous Malone woman, and she led you into the act, for which you were sorry? He and Ruth would then take you back, and that would save all the disgrace of being sent to jail, and having your photograph adorn the Rogues' Gallery."

"That's all very well to say, but I have absolutely nothing to confess, more than I have told you."

"You then don't believe Maggie took the watches?"

"No. She could not possibly have done so without my seeing her. On the other hand, I twice had to step into an adjoining room, where pledges are kept, for the purpose of getting goods that people had come to redeem. Therefore, it is my theory, that it was during one of these brief periods of absence the robbery was perpetrated."

"Did you express this opinion to Rosenthal?"

"Yes, but he was inclined to think me guilty because he had, in some way, learned that I had been seen in company with the Malone woman."

"Well, what do you propose to do, now?"

"I have no definite object. I presume, however, I can get employment of some sort."

"Providing you are not arrested!"

"I suppose so."

"Well, now, look here, Lowenstein; I am not inclined to haul you up before a magistrate just at present, if at all. I'll tell you the reason why, trusting to your secrecy. I want this woman for criminal offenses, and I want you to assist me in finding her. Promise faithfully to assist me, according to directions, and I will do what I can to smooth your way back into the confidence of your uncle and affianced, after we have secured the Malone."

"It's a bargain!" Isaac declared, eagerly. "You can depend on me."

"Very well. Your business will be to frequent such resorts as Maggie is likely to visit, and have your usual chat with her, giving her no reason to believe that she is suspected of the theft. When you leave her, if possible appoint an interview with her, for the next afternoon or evening, on the pretext of having a good time. Then, write me at the—"

House, notifying me where the interview is to take place."

"All right. What is your name?"

"Fergus Fleming."

"Well, I'll try and find her. If she is not here, early to-night, I'll look in at the other resorts."

"Do so, and I'll try and help you back into your uncle's employ."

Dick left the garden, considering that he had as good as gained another point in the mysterious case.

CHAPTER IX.

NUMBER 2—HESTER STREET.

DEADWOOD DICK did not doubt but what Dudley had a plot on foot to get possession of the insurance on Wallace Norval's life.

Norval had gone to prison under the assumed name of Robert Buchanan, and was, accordingly, practically lost to the world.

A man had died in Dudley's care whom he had claimed to be Wallace Norval. A certificate of death and a burial permit had been obtained, in the same name.

Norine Norval had been sent for to come to New York.

What for?—to get the insurance?

If the insurance were to be paid to her how was Dudley to be paid for his scheming?

Question:

Was there not a conspiracy between Dudley and Maggie Malone, by which the latter was to personate Norine and receive the insurance, and share it with Dudley? If so, what had become of the real Norine?

Foully dealt with, no doubt.

One point Deadwood Dick had failed to investigate, while at Blackwell's, lest he give the case dead away into the hands of the New York detective,

Sperrin—that was, in what company had young Norval's life been insured, and now a most important and necessary thing for the Western detective to know.

But, how was he to find out?

Deadwood Dick formed a further immediate plan of action.

He would visit the house in Hester street, in disguise, that he might not betray his identity, if Dudley should be discovered.

A visit to the Bowery resulted in his securing a seedy black suit of clothes, with a "plug" hat to match, which, together with a pair of bushy but tangled black side-whiskers, completely changed his appearance, and made him look like a man who had been on the "outs" with a hard winter.

When all prepared, he set out for the unsavory precincts of Hester street.

He was not long in locating 2—, and found that it was a three-story-and-attic tenement, of grimy outside appearance—a human beehive, as it were, for there was from one to half a dozen faces at each front window, and a shabbily dressed woman, minus one eye, standing in the doorway.

Dick stopped as he reached the foot of the steps.

"Could ye tell me, mum, where I'd be findin' a decent cheap room, fur a week or two?"

"I have bare the one lift, sur. It's two-an'-a-half."

"How far up, mum?"

"Third story, not countin' basement. It's a nice illegant room for the price—right next to Mither Dudley's an' no young 'uns near."

"D'ye know of none chaper, in the street, mum?"

Dick asked, looking about.

"Divil a one, sur. I kape the most r'asonable place in tha city, as ye'll observe, whin I tell yez I've thirty people in me house."

"Well, then I s'pose I'd be better takin' yer room," and Dick began to mount the steps.

"Stop a bit!" the slouchy-looking landlady commanded, suspiciously. "Are yez sure ye have the two-an'-a-half?"

"Ah! an' I have, mum, an' seven-fifty, besides."

"Then, you're me man; walk right in, sur. Tha house is open, night an' day, an' yez can come an' go whenever ye please. Shure, I think you'll find it a very illegant place to live."

"Heaven help the 'illigance!" Dick mentally commended, as he was conducted into a carpetless hall, and thence up dusty, creaking stairs, which looked as if they had not been cleaned in years.

Reaching the third-story apartment, Dick was ushered in.

It was a small room, with a single bed, none too clean looking, an old wash-stand, and a wooden chair.

The carpet was old and shabby.

There was also a wash-bowl and pitcher, and a candle.

The room had one small window looking out in the rear.

"This will answer!" Dick said, as the woman began to expatiate on the "illigance" of the room.

"Here's your two-and-a-half."

Taking which, Mrs. O'Hooligan left.

Closing and locking his door, Dick lit a cigar, and sat down on the chair, to think over matters.

"I don't think I should fancy this for a permanent abode!" he muttered. "Yet I suppose thousands of people occupy j st such quarters, in this city."

He had not long, however, to devote his mind to such thoughts.

Here he was in the house where Colonel Dudley had his main head-quarters.

And Maggie Malone, too, according to Isaac Lowenstein's statement.

Dudley's room was next to the one Dick occupied, according to the landlady, and must be at Dick's right, looking out upon the area.

Dick spent an hour in smoking, making not the slightest noise.

Then, getting cautiously upon the bed, which was next to the thin partition between the two rooms, he lay there, quietly.

At first he heard no movement, but, after awhile, two persons came up-stairs, and entered the next room—one evidently a man, and the other a woman.

"Confound the accursed luck!" the man growled, directly, in tones that betrayed a savage temper.

"Why! what's the matter, Delos? What troubles you? Did I not pass the examination, admirably?"

"You did well enough!" was the gruff answer, "but d'ye know that chap they call auditor watched us like a hawk, while we were being examined, and I fancied he didn't take any too much stock in us."

"Oh! pshaw! You're always borrowing trouble. The examining clerk appeared to be satisfied, and told us to call to-morrow. The Vice-President, too, didn't look suspicious."

"That's not his business. It's the auditor whose opinion rules the shebang, in such cases as these."

"Oh! well; we will get the boodle, to-morrow, sure enough, I hope so, anyhow, for I want to skip for a less dangerous locality, soon. This dodging is getting tiresome, with the cases piled up so strong against me."

"If we get the money, I'll not be far behind you," Dudley declared, grimly. "There'll be the devil to pay when the girl gets free, as she eventually must. Hark! some one is coming up-stairs. Get into the closet, lively!"

Rather heavy footsteps came up the stairs, and an equally heavy fist rapped on the door of Dudley's room.

"Come in!" the crook ordered, gruffly, then the visitor entered and closed the door behind.

Dudley uttered an oath, followed with the ejaculation:

"Blondy Mehagan!"

"Yes, Blondy Mehagan!" that person's unmistakable voice cried, much to the surprise of listen-

ing Deadwood Dick, "Blondey Mehagan, the toughest gal in the Bowery."

"So I see—so I see. What the devil brought you here, though, and where did you get all the togs?"

"Stole 'em, of course. I come here for money. I'm near dyin' for a drink, and *must* have it!"

"I don't keep a bar, you fool!"

"I know you don't, but you've got money!"

"Yes, and I propose to keep it, rather than let you drink it up!"

"Ye do, eh? S'posen I had some news of importance fer you?"

"Bah! That won't work!"

"But, it will. I'll give you the tip that a detective interviewed me concernin' you and Mag. If you want to know any more go down and fetch up a bottle of genuine old Irish whisky, an' a glass, and lay a five-dollar note alongside, and I'll spit out all I know. Refuse, and I'll skip back for the hotel, where I'm bein' kept like a lady by the feller as what bought these togs. Come! are you goin'?"

Dudley uttered an ugly snarl.

"Yer tryin' to work me!" he growled.

"Not a bit! You do as I ask, and I'll s'prise you w' news that'll make ye go keeful, out on the streets."

"What d'ye want with the five dollars? Ain't the whisky enough?"

"No. I'm goin' on a bu'st, down the Bowery, an' ef I meet Mary Ann Mulligan, the blackguard, I'll black her eyes!"

Dudley arose and went down-stairs.

In a few minutes he returned, and placed a bottle and glass on the table.

"Aha-a-a! That's the stuff!" Blondey said, as Dudley sat down the bottle. "Sure it's a fly feller ye are, Doc, if I do say it, and I don't care who knows it. Come down w' the fiver now and I'll tell ye the news."

"Well, there it is, so if you have any news to communicate spin ahead 'thout any parley."

"Well, ye see I was in Phazzi's day before yesterday, and a man come in who begun makin' inquiries about Mike's place. Of course when Phazzi called me, and I heard what was wanted, I twigged his jags at once as bein' a detective, and I got in my work beautiful by givin' Mike's place a tough name. Then the feller begun makin' inquiries about you."

"About me?"

"You bet! I hinted that you weren't above a sp'icion, but kept pretty close-mouthed, an' told a pitiful tale about gittin' kicked out o' Mike's an' goin' down step fer step to perdition."

"This caught him off his base, and he promised, if I'd tell him all I knew about you and Wallace Norval, he'd sober me up, get me new clothes, and then find me a home in some respectable family."

"Of course you agreed?" with a sneer.

"You bet!"

"I've a mind to kill you!"

"Bah! You ain't big enough! I'm the terror of East Side Dam, an' don't you forgit it!" and Blondey brought her fist down on the table so hard that the bottle danced.

"Enough of that!" Dudley growled. "Go on with what you have to say."

"Well, the first I knowed, I was puttin' up at a hotel, foine as ye please, w' all these scrump togs, an' the detective was a-quizzin' me. He wanted to know all about you and Norval. I told him you were a pair o' crooks, but that was all I know'd about you, 'cept that Norval was on the Island under the alias of Bob Buchanan, fer robbin' a house."

"You told him this?" fiercely.

"Yes!"

"Curse your infernal stupidity. What did you do it for?"

"Because I couldn't get out of it, he acted so gentleman like to me."

"You're a consummate idiot. I've a good notion to knife you."

"Bah! Who's afraid of you? You keep yer clapper still till I git through."

"After he left me, I follered him, an' found that he had gone to Blackwell's Island, w' Si Sperrin. When they cum back, I found where the chap's hotel was—"

"What's his name?"

"Fergus Fleming, he calls hisself. Well, I found wher' he put up, and then I went over to the Island, and saw Jack."

"How did you get over?"

"Oh! I worked the sister racket. Well, you know, Jack allus counted you an' me on bad terms, and so he let me into the hull business. The detective is after you and after Mag Malone, and he's inquirin' 'bout an insurance on Jack's life, which Jack thinks you're tryin' to git. An' about Jack's sister who was sent for to come on from Philadelphia, as Jack was dead. The detective is hot onto the case, and you and Mag are in danger of gittin' snapped up!"

Dudley uttered a savage oath.

"Curses seize the fellow! Mag?"

"Here I am, Colonel," and the confidence woman was heard by Deadwood Dick to step from the closet.

"Have you heard this girl's story?"

"Yes."

"What do you think of it?"

"I'm sure it's true."

"But this detective! Who the devil's he?"

"I know him. He's a Western chap."

"Eh?"

"A Western chap. You remember my tellin' you about the guy I worked on the train over from Philly? Well, this detective is that very individual."

"How do you know?"

"Because in his pocket-book I found a scrap of paper containing the name Fergus Fleming. Describe the man, Blondey."

Blondey did so, giving as accurate a description of the Western Detective Prince as any person possibly could have done.

"The very chap I did up, on the train!" Maggie declared.

"But, how in the deuce did he get onto this Norval racket?" Dudley demanded, savagely.

"I haven't the slightest idea!" Maggie deliberately lied. "You know Norine was on that same train, and—"

"Shut up! You don't know who may be in the next room!" Dudley cautioned.

"Pooh! that's not occupied! I asked Mrs. O'Hooligan about it this morning, and gave her a V to keep it vacant."

"Good idea! And now, Blondey, wherc does this Fergus Fleming put up?"

"At the Sinclair Hotel."

"Sure?"

"Deed I am. I sent a boy in, to look over the register."

"Very well. You can go, now. Very much obliged for this information, and here's another five. After you get over your spree, call around; I may have some work for you."

"I will—I will. An' now, I'll bid yez good-day, and go an' paint the Bowery red from Houston to Canal street. By-by!"

And rising, Miss Mehagan shuffled unsteadily from the room, and down the stairs.

There was then a silence in Dudley's room, of several minutes' duration.

Finally Dudley spoke up.

"I've half a notion, Mag, you let a cat out of the bag to this Fleming, that has set him on the scent!"

"No such a thing!" was the spunky response.

"If I thought you did, I'd kill you!" Dudley frankly announced.

"But I didn't. I had but a few words of conversation with the man, and never mentioned such a person as Norval. I have no doubt but what he must have met Norine on the train, and learned her story."

"Why then, should he be hunting us up?"

"Why, she may have invited him to call on her at Colonel Dudley's on Fourth avenue, and on making inquiries for the Colonel, and finding him to be a tough character, he was naturally suspicious of foul play, and it seems Blondey helped the suspicion."

This seemed to satisfy Dudley, on this point.

Maggie had worked the part out, admirably, to screen herself.

"This accursed detective must be gotten rid of!" Dudley declared, with an oath. "It won't do for us to be balked, at this stage of the game. If the cuss was shrewd enough to pick up the trail, he will likely be shrewd enough to make us trouble!"

"You're sensible! He must be got out of the way but how? There's a question for your gigantic mind to solve."

"We shall have to study up some way, and in the mean time keep as shady as possible. Under no consideration must the girl be visited, without going by night, and by a roundabout way."

"Oh! there's no use of visitin' her. Mom will tend to her all O. K. Once I induced her to spend the night with me, she was safely in a trap she won't soon get out of. When she is let loose, Mom will be ready to skip back to Ireland."

"Well, be careful, if you go out, that's all. We may be watched at every turn. I must get down toward the Battery, now, where I expect to see some of the boys."

"If I do not see you, before morning, what time shall we go to the insurance office?"

"That depends on circumstances. Not until after dinner, I reckon. Better let 'em get through with the forenoon rush, first. Then, we'll have a better show."

"All right—say two o'clock. If I do not see you before then, I'll be at the office."

"Try and be around in the morning. We may need to consult. And if you see any chance to get the detective into a trap, where he will be safe, do so."

"Oh! you bet I will!"

Dudley arose and left the room, going down-stairs.

About half an hour later, Maggie Malone followed his example, locking the door after her.

CHAPTER X.

THE DECOY.

Of course Deadwood Dick had listened to the foregoing conversation with great interest; it had given him "a big lift."

The treachery of the Mehagan girl had greatly surprised him, but he was now aware of her true character, and considered that it was lucky he had done nothing more for her than he had.

He had learned so much by the conversation that he was doubtful which was the best course first to pursue.

Should he arrest the precious pair of conspirators without further ado, or should he first endeavor to find and liberate Norine Norval, in order to deepen the evidence against them?

If he pursued the latter course, it would be necessary to find the girl, so as to produce her before the insurance company on the morrow.

He must also learn from Wallace Norval the intelligence regarding what company his life was insured in. How was he to do this? It was not likely he could get over to the Island again easily.

Leaving the Hester-street den, he sought the costumer's where he had left his own clothes, and again donned them.

He then sought detective head-quarters, and found Si Sperrin.

He was doing nothing, and recognized Dick with a nod.

Dick came to the point at once.

"Sperrin," he said, "I suppose you are aware that I am trying to work up a little detective case?"

Sperrin smiled.

"Yes," he assented; "but there's nothing in it, is there?"

"Nothing that I am aware of—except for humanity's sake and an aim to baffle a villainous scheme."

"Poor pay that."

"It might be for you, but not for me, as I am not particularly in need of pecuniary remuneration. Have you, individually, access to the Island?"

"I might get over on a pinch."

"Well, then, I'll tell you what I'll do. If you will go over, see the prisoner we visited, and ask a question of him, for me, I'll give you ten dollars."

"Correct—I'm your man. What do you want asked?"

"I want you to tell him that I want to know, to prevent fraud, what company his life is insured in, and where the company's office is."

"Very well; I'll get an order, on some pretext or other, and go at once."

Accordingly Dick paid him a ten-dollar note.

"Where shall I send the answer?"

Dick gave him a card with the directions, and then took his departure, going at once to the hotel.

Just toward night a letter was handed him.

He opened it eagerly, and read what Sperrin had written.

"Good!" he commented. "Now, then, for Norine."

Where was Norine?

Going back to the conversation he had overheard in the Hester-street house, he remembered of Maggie Malone saying:

"Oh! there's no use of visitin'. Mom will attend to her all O. K. Once I induced her to spend the night with me, she was safely in a trap she won't soon get out of," etc.

What did this signify?

The night of Dick's arrival in Jersey City, Maggie had said she should remain in Jersey City, at one of the hotels near the depot.

After Dick had hurried aboard the ferry, had Maggie intercepted Norine, having previously met her on board the train, and persuaded her to spend the night with her?

It looked probable.

But where had poor Norine been decoyed to? Had the two strangely-met girls remained in Jersey City that night, or had they taken a later boat and come over to New York?

Dick was half inclined to the opinion that they had remained in Jersey City.

"A little investigation won't hurt," Dick muttered, and in less than half an hour he was at the Desbrosses Street Ferry.

On arrival in Jersey City, he sought the police head-quarters, and interviewed the sergeant, who appeared to be of a more obliging disposition than those usually encountered.

The substance of the interview was as follows:

"Do you know a criminal character over here—a pickpocket, confidence-woman, and so forth—known as Maggie Malone?"

"Yes, sir. She's about as well known over here as in New York. She's a slippery one, and it's something wonderful the scrapes she's been into, and yet avoided arrest."

"Never been able to catch her, eh?"

"No."

"Is there any reward for her?"

"Not that I'm aware of, although there is no doubt but what her many victims would make up a liberal purse to the man who could put her under lock and key."

"Has she any connections here?"

"Yes. The old woman has a house and lot on the back of the city, which old Pat left when he died. He was an honest old fellow, but the old woman ain't above a sp'icion, and we keep a watch, in hopes of nabbin' Mag, but with no success."

"Could you direct me so I could find the Malone house?"

"Hardly, unless you are well acquainted with the outskirts."

"Which I am not. I will present to you a case, however, and would like you to act upon it. I am engaged in working up a case, in which this Malone woman and a pal are secretly and fraudulently endeavoring to obtain the insurance on the life of a man who is not dead. To accomplish this, a sister of this man was decoyed to Jersey City, and there all traces of her are lost. I have traced matters so far, however, that I believe her to be a prisoner in the charge of some of Mag Malone's relatives—namely, 'Mom'!"

"That's the old woman."

"Then there is where the girl Norine Norval is undoubtedly confined. Now, you see, this Malone has made application for, and expects to receive, the insurance to-morrow. I intend to frustrate her aim, and arrest her; but to do it right, I want the real Norine."

"But, how can Malone get the money on the life of a man who is not dead?"

"Easy. One of her pals died, and was buried under the name of the insured person, while that real person is serving out a sentence on Blackwell's Island."

"Are you a detective, sir?"

"In the West I have done service in that line."

"Then, you have no appointment?"

"None. But I would like you to detail a squad of police to raid the Malone house, in quest of the girl."

"We would be overreaching our authority, sir,

you being a stranger to us. Are you a citizen of New York?"

"No, sir. I am a stranger, but a few days from the West. I was robbed, on the cars between here and Philadelphia—this side of Trenton—by this Malone woman, and by working up the case, through a chance clew I picked up in her seat, I have been able to get hold of the plot I have unfolded."

"You must be an expert. Have you laid this matter before Police Captain Williams, of the Metropolitan force?"

"No, sir; I chose to work up the case on my own hook. It is only now I feel in need of official assistance."

"Well, our captain is not in just now, and I can't do anything for you. When he comes in, I'll lay the case before him. In the mean time, I'd advise you to apply to Inspector Byrnes of New York, and he'll assist you to special detective power. Then, we can help you, simply on your information. In case we should want to see you, where will we send?"

"My address is the Sinclair House—Fergus Fleming; but it is doubtful if I'll be there to-night, as I mean to keep at this matter until I score my point."

"I admire your spunk, sir. Good-night."

"Good-night," Dick replied as he left the station.

He was vexed at the treatment he had received, and vexed at himself because he could think of no plan for the rescue of Norine Norval.

It was not likely that any of the cabmen at the ferry would know where this particular widow Malone lived, for there might be a dozen Malones in the city, so common was the name.

It was now quite dark, and after deliberating a few minutes, Dick wandered slowly back toward the ferry, and returned to New York.

He stopped at his hotel a few minutes, and then wandered up to Union Square, and thence along East Fourteenth street.

He looked in at the Palm Garden, but could see nothing of Isaac Lowenstein; and so, feeling fatigued, entered a theater near by, and remained until the performance was over, when he returned to the hotel, and retired for the night.

He had been abed but a few minutes, when he was called by the porter, who stated that there was a gentleman down-stairs, who wanted to see him on important business.

Somewhat curious, Dick quickly dressed himself.

Before going down-stairs some unknown impulse caused him to sit down at a table, and write a postal-card, as follows, addressing it to the insurance company:

"Under no circumstances, pay any money on the life-policy of Wallace Norval, before I see you—not to Norine Norval, Delos Dudley, nor anybody else."

"FERGUS FLEMING, Detective."

When he went down-stairs, he deposited this in the collection letter-box.

He was almost immediately approached by a short, wiry little man, with a sharp nose, thin black mustache, and keen eyes.

"Are you Fergus Fleming?" he asked.

"I am, sir."

"Well, sir, I was dispatched here by the police captain of Jersey City, to announce to you that he has sent a squad of men to investigate the matter at the Malone house, on the outskirts, subject to your report. The raid will not be made until toward morning, and believing you might wish to be present, I was detailed to conduct you to the place, if you wish to go. My name is Hanover."

"Well, that's clever of the captain," Dick said. "I should very much like to be on hand when the raid is made."

"Then, no time is to be lost, for it's quite a little distance out there."

"I'm all ready, sir. Steer ahead."

They hurriedly walked out to Broadway, down to Canal, through Canal to Desbrosses street and thence to the ferry.

Arriving in Jersey City, they took a *coupe*, and were driven rapidly away.

The night was intensely dark, and the street lamps emitted but fitful gleams of light.

"Tain't often the captain takes it into his head to send a squad of men so far, so late at night!" Hanover remarked, as they rattled along through dark and quiet streets, "but he's a queer jigger, at best, and the boys have to toe the mark. The captain seemed to take a notion to your story, and so he gave orders to search the house."

"I am glad. I am sure an innocent girl will be found locked up there. Are you connected with the force?"

"I am the captain's nephew, and a sort of special courier of his. He sent me for you as I could reach you quicker than a telegram."

"Will the *coupe* take us direct to the house?"

"Oh! no. We shall have five squares to walk, from where we get out. The *coupe* will await our return."

After a long drive, as it seemed to Dick, the vehicle stopped, and they got out.

Dark though it was, Dick could see that they were in a sparsely-settled section, where the houses were few and far between.

"Come ahead!" Hanover said. "We haven't so very far to walk."

"Did the police walk all the way out here?"

"Well, not much. They came out in a van, on the next street above."

Dick asked no more questions, but they trudged forward.

He had no suspicion but what it was all a *bona-fide* proceeding, or he'd not have gone forward so freely.

He was confident that Norine Norval would be

found in the Malone house, and to-morrow, with her by his side, he could frustrate the conspirators' plot, and thus score one of his cleverest victories in the detective line, and could have it to say that his visit to the great metropolis had not been without some good.

He did not look for any pecuniary reward, more than, possibly, to get back some of the money he had lost, and his watch. And that was doubtful even.

The houses became more and more scattered as they pressed on over what was an unpaved road.

"Purty near there," Hanover said cheerily—"can almost see the house, over yonder."

He pointed to Dick's left.

Dick looked inquiringly in the direction indicated, and as he did so, Hanover hauled off and hit him a blow on the head with a black-jack that felled him to the ground, insensible and bleeding.

The villain then blew a sharp blast on a whistle.

In a couple of minutes a man came running up the road.

"I told you so!" Hanover cried, triumphantly, "and I did. D'y'e see?"

The man who approached was "Colonel" Delos Dudley!

CHAPTER XI.

ISAAC PROVES GOOD AS HIS WORD.

WHEN Deadwood Dick left Isaac Lowenstein, as recorded in a previous chapter, the young Hebrew sat several minutes in deep deliberation.

"It's my chance," he mused with knitted brows, "and I'll be a fool not to improve it. I love Ruth, and I've been a wretch to have anything whatever to do with that adventuress, Maggie Malone. The detective is a first-class fellow, and little knows the horrors he has saved me by his leniency. I'll not wait till night, but will set to work now."

He did. He hovered about the various places where he had reason to believe he might run across the female crook; but it was not until mid-afternoon that he gained a clew; then he saw Maggie and Delos Dudley entering the Hester-street "fence"—for it afterward turned out to be nothing more or less.

Isaac hovered about the neighborhood until he saw first Dudley come out, and then Maggie.

He did not seek to speak to her; on the contrary, he cautiously set out to shadow her.

Why, he could not readily have answered, but some impulse caused him to do so.

He dogged her about from place to place for hours, cleverly managing not to lose sight of her, nor to let himself be seen.

At last she and Dudley met on Cortlandt street, near the ferry, and held a conversation of several minutes' duration, after which they proceeded down the street together and entered the ferry-house.

"Jersey City, eh?" Isaac commented. "Well, in the interest of my friend, it is my business to keep track of you two, for I take you for a pair of knaves."

Giving them time to get aboard the boat, he also got on board, but kept out of their sight.

On their arrival in Jersey City, he was still on the trail, and saw them take a *coupe* and drive away.

He was now nonplused, and dared not give chase for fear of exciting suspicion.

He had taken the number of the vehicle, and resolved to await its return.

It proved a somewhat tedious wait, however, and, in the mean time, Isaac slipped into a saloon and pinned a badge to his vest.

It was a relic—a professional detective's badge, which some impecunious individual had pawned for a few cents, at Rosenthal's office. Not being redeemed Isaac had bought it as a relic, and polished it up to its former brightness, but having no idea that he would have occasion to put it to any practical use.

It now occurred to him that it might come in handy.

After a tiresome wait, and when it was nearly dark, the *coupe* returned to its stand, and let Delos Dudley out, who immediately entered the ferry, and crossed to the New York side.

"Maggie did not return!" young Lowenstein commented. "I wonder what sort of rascality this precious pair are up to, anyhow? Maggie is in Jersey City somewhere, and I'm going to find out where she is, if possible."

After a few minutes of deliberation, he crossed the street, and approached the cabman, who was leaning idly against one of his horses.

"Good-afternoon!" Isaac accosted, pleasantly.

"Is this vehicle to hire?"

"Yes, boss—take you to any part of the city cheap as any other man on the stand. Git right inside."

"Not so fast, my friend!" Isaac demurred. "How do you know where I want to go?"

"Well, where do you want to go?"

"To the house where you left the young woman on your last trip."

"The dickens you do! What do you want to go there for?"

"That does not matter. Will you take me within sight of the house where you left the young woman?"

"Can't do it, boss. Too far out, an' my horses are tired out."

"That's a thin excuse. See here!" and Isaac stepped closer to the man, "do you know who your passengers were?"

"No, sir. We are not supposed to know who we carry!" the *coupe* man declared, with presumptuous dignity.

"Well, they were two notorious crooks, the wo-

man being Maggie Malone. You know this, and it is useless for you to deny it!"

"It's none of your business, young man, what I know, or what I don't know!"

"We shall see!" Isaac replied, coolly. "I want you to take me within sight of the house where you left the girl. Refuse, if you dare!"

And he exhibited the detective badge.

The driver whistled, looked the young Jew over from head to foot, and then opened the door of the vehicle.

"Git in!" he said, tersely.

And Isaac did, and was soon being driven rapidly away.

The badge had served him one good turn, at any rate.

The *coupe* rattled along over the pavement at rapid speed, and by the time it was fairly dark, came to a halt near the spot where, later that night, Deadwood Dick had received the stunning blow that rendered him insensible.

"D'y'e see that single light, ahead there?" the driver said, as he let young Lowenstein in.

"Yes."

"Well, there's where the girl got out. It's none of my business who or what she is, but I'd advise you not to go nosin' too free around the place, or you may get hurt!"

"All right. What do I owe you? You need not wait for me."

"Two dollars."

Isaac paid the bill cheerfully; then Jehu mounted his box, and drove back into the city, leaving Isaac standing in the middle of the road, with the pall of night over him.

"I wonder what I'm doing here, anyhow!" he muttered, seating himself on the ground by the roadside. "This is not a very cheering-looking locality after dark, at the best, and these flats look as if they might be a camping-ground for thieves and murderers. But, I've gone so far, and Isaac, you're not the one to back out—never. I rather like this detective work, and I'm going to see what is going on, over yonder."

He had no weapons, but this did not cause him to hesitate. He was young and strong, and a stranger to actual fear.

Before pressing on toward the Malone house, which was a two-story, unpainted frame dwelling, not many years built, Isaac took time to deliberate.

True, Dudley had gone over to New York, but was there not a possibility, even a probability that he might return, and catch Isaac in the act of spying about the house?

The amateur detective believed there was, and concluded to wait a while in a convenient deep doorway.

He waited fully two hours, and had about decided to approach the house, without further delay, when he heard heavy footsteps approaching.

A few moments later, Delos Dudley passed by, going toward the Malone dwelling.

"Ah! I was not mistaken, after all!" Isaac muttered. "If I'd gone before, I would have been trapped. Now is my time."

He emerged from the deep shadows of the doorway and glided forward, reaching the house almost as soon as Dudley did.

The house was barren on the exterior, of even a porch, and was not inclosed by a fence. There was a fine garden, however, all around the premises.

The only visible light shone through the curtained window of what was evidently the kitchen. All the other windows were curtained and dark.

When satisfied that Dudley had entered the house, Isaac stole up to the window first mentioned.

It was up just a trifle from the bottom, and by applying his ear to the crack, he could hear what was going on on the inside.

"Well, how did you make out?" a voice asked, that Isaac recognized as belonging to Maggie Malone.

"Couldn't have done better!" Dudley replied, with evident satisfaction. "I got rid of the watch, down on Third avenue, and flung Fleming's pocket-book into the river. Now, we've nothing in the world any one can lay claim to, except money, and no one can swear positively to that. But I've got some startling news."

"What? what?" Maggie and another feminine voice inquired, in chorus.

"Oh! something that would be dangerous, but for my ready wit in averting the danger. I've got it all fixed up O. K., now, however."

"You see, when I returned from New York, I met my old pal, Fox-eye, alias Bill Hanover. You know his uncle is police captain, now, this side, and Bill's kind of a supe in his office. Well, you see, when Bill saw me, he run me one side, and said he had some important news for me. He asked me if you, Mag, were out here. Then he told me that a little while before, a fellow named Fergus Fleming had called at the central station and made inquiries about you, wanting to know if you had any relations here. The sergeant told him your mother lived out here, whereupon Fleming wanted directions how to find the place!"

"Great Heaven!"

"The sergeant couldn't give 'em. Fleming then tried to get a squad of police to come and raid the place. He said there was a girl shut up here, named Norine Norval, and that you and I were trying to get possession of the insurance on Norine's brother's life, when, in reality, young Norval wasn't dead, but a convict on the Island!"

"The d. vil!" Miss Maggie Malone irreverently uttered.

"You see that Fleming is greased lightning on the

scent," Dudley went on, "and has got the case down pat. It nearly lifted me out o' my boots when I heard about it!"

"What's to be done?"

"Oh! wait. Don't get in a sweat. I'm no fool. Bill said that Fleming told the sergeant he meant to frustrate our scheme, to-morrow, and arrest us, at all events, but he wanted the girl. The sergeant quizzed him awhile, and finally told him he could do nothing for him—the captain was out. If the captain concluded to send the squad, notice would be sent Fleming at the Sinclair House."

"Well, the captain didn't conclude to send the squad. Both he and the sergeant regarded Fleming as a no-go."

"Thank goodness! Did Fleming go back to New York?"

"Yes. Bill kept watch of him, and saw him get aboard the boat."

"Well?"

"Well, I considered the matter, and as the fellow had been so shrewd so far, I believed he would not stop until he found some means of reaching us. So I got up a plan to rid ourselves of the cuss."

"Let's hear it."

"Well, I arranged with Bill to go to New York and hunt up Fleming, and represent to him that he had been sent by the captain, who had concluded to raid the Malone house and had already dispatched a squad of men, and if Fleming wanted to be present at the raid he must accompany Bill, who would conduct him here."

"Good! What else?"

"Nothing. I saw Bill on board the ferry-boat, and then came away. Bill will find the detective, no doubt, and the fool, smart as he is, will bite at the bait. Bill will knock the senses out of him with a billy when they get 'most here, and we'll bind him, chuck him down in the cellar, and he can lay there till we're safe out of New York. I've made arrangements with Cutchy—the driver who brought us here—to call for us at two o'clock and drive us to Christopher Street Ferry, where we'll cross to New York."

"Why go back to New York?"

"Because, even though we do away with Fleming, I do not regard this place, henceforth, as any too safe. He may have left behind something that would cause a raid."

"Will you take the girl along?"

"Of course. We'll drug her before we leave here."

"But where will we go in New York—to Hester street?"

"Not much! I'm done with *that* place. You remember Jack Clinker's, where I used to hang out?"

"Yes."

"Well, I saw him yesterday, and asked him if I were to want to hide myself and others, if his place would be safe, and he said 'cert.'"

"Am I to go along?" asked Mrs. Malone.

"Course you are!"

"When do you expect Hanover?"

"At any minute. He may be delayed in getting his man, but he'll fetch him between now and one o'clock, mark my word. If he hasn't come when the *coupe* gets here, I'll give Cutchy the directions, send you off, and wait."

Conversation lagged at this juncture, and so young Lowenstein withdrew from the vicinity and secreted himself again in the doorway.

"I'm by no means sorry I came now," he muttered, "for my chance is near to do Fleming a good turn that he cannot fail to appreciate, and I am satisfied he will do as he said by me."

"He is to be left shut up in the house when these wretches go away, but he won't remain shut up long, or my name isn't Isaac. I'll have him out and at liberty before the party get half a mile on their journey."

"And as for this Jack Clinker's place, I happen to know just where it is. A lot of stolen stuff came to us from there once, and we traced the matter up and had Clinker arrested, but could prove nothing. So they've really got the girl, Norine Norval, shut up in there, have they? I wish I could get her out."

This, however, was an undertaking not to be thought of.

He was not armed, the odds were three to one against him, and he did not know in which room Norine was confined; consequently, it would be both rash and foolish to attempt a rescue.

The only thing practicable seemed to be to lay quiet and bide his time.

To be sure, he might warn Fleming of the peril that menaced him, but, considering the desolate character of the neighborhood, might this not entail more serious consequences?

So the probabilities seemed.

The young Hebrew waited and watched with patience becoming of a much older hand in the business.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE MALONE HOUSE.

"HAVE you killed him?" demanded Dudley, as he approached the spot where Deadwood Dick was lying.

"Oh, no! I didn't hit hard enough, for that!" Hanover replied. "I thumped him on the right spot you know, and he dropped. I used to be a first-class artist at that sort of business, and haven't got my hand out yet."

"So I see. Did you have any trouble in fetchin' him?"

"Not a bit. The plan worked like a charm. I found him at the hotel, rather late, and when I told him about the raid, he thought the captain was a

first-class fellow, an' trotted right along wi' me, like a tame lamb. Got any straps?"

"Yes; here they are. I thought they would be wanted."

"All right. What are you going to do with him?"

"Bind him so there is no possibility of escaping, shut him in the cellar, and then, when we vamoose, lock up the house. It is so far from any other habitation that there's no danger of his being heard, even were he to yell his lungs out."

The process of binding Dick, hand and foot, occupied but a short time; then, his apparently inanimate form was raised, and he was borne toward the dwelling; into it he was carried, and deposited upon the bare kitchen floor, in the full light of the lamp.

Mrs. Malone and Maggie sat at either end of a table that was placed against the wall.

Both wore hard, merciless expressions, and the sight of the clotting blood upon Deadwood Dick's head did not appear to materially affect them.

"Is he dead?" Maggie asked, indifferently.

"Oh! no. He'll be as lively as a cricket by and by," Bill Hanover declared.

"I think on the whole, we'd better bring him to," Dudley said. "I'd like to question him. If he gets boisterous it will be an easy matter to chloroform him."

"Just as you say. You're the boss, not I!"

Dudley procured a wet towel, and soused off Dick's head, and dashed a quantity of cold water into his face.

This soon caused Dick to open his eyes.

He was lying with his head partly resting against the wall, so that he could gaze about the room.

This he did deliberately, his gaze resting more particularly on Dudley, and Maggie Malone.

"Well, my fine fellow, how d'ye think you feel?"

Dudley demanded, triumphantly.

"Except for a sore head, I feel in usual good health!" Dick responded.

"Oh! you do, eh? Ain't quite so frisky as you were, though?"

"Perhaps not. That's owing to the straps. Let me have the use of my limbs, and I'll try to convince you that I am just as frisky as I used to be, if not a little more so."

"Sorry we cannot accommodate. You have been so exceedingly lively to our interests, already, that it becomes us to see that you have a spell of quiet and rest. How came you to find out so much about this Norval case?"

"Why do you want to know?"

"Oh! just out of curiosity. Not that it will affect matters one way or the other, for we shall keep you a prisoner until after we get the insurance and skip. I have curiosity to know how you even picked up the first thread of the plot."

"It was through your amiable partner, there!" Dick said, nodding to Maggie. "I found her in my seat on the train. She represented herself to be Norine Norval, going to get her brother's body, at the residence of Colonel Delos Dudley, number—Fourth avenue. She got me to change a note for her, and in some mysterious manner robbed me of my watch and pocket-book. When we got out of the cars, I saw some scraps of paper on the seat, and put them up in my pocket. They afterward proved to be a pawn-ticket, issued to Maggie, and a scrap of paper, containing your name and address on one side, and the address, No. 2—Hester street, on the other side. From this point I set to work, and picked up the trail."

Dudley turned fiercely upon Maggie Malone.

"So, if we're baffled, it's through you, eh?" he gritted.

"If you believe what the man tells you—yes!" she retorted, coolly.

"Of course I believe him. I'd take his word to yours, any time!"

"Oh! don't get too sassy, now. I won't take none of your lip, Delos Dudley. If you expect to get possession of the insurance, I wonder how you'd get it, without me?"

Dudley grated his teeth.

The shot had hit home.

He well knew all his schemes would be frustrated, indeed, should Maggie withdraw her support; so without vouchsafing any reply, he turned to the prisoner.

"You are too shrewd a chap to be at liberty, and too cute to kill!" he said, admiringly. "I'd rather admire you but for the fact that it would be detrimental to my interests."

"Your admiration is in no wise solicited!" Dick assured.

"Well, I suppose not. Don't know as I should want it, were I in your boots. Now, you see, we are bound to get that insurance on young Norval's life. It won't do him any good and it will us. He is strong and healthy; we are growing old. He's got a certainty of grub, such as it is, for six months, yet; we've got to skirmish for ours. Hence, the undeniable reason why we should have the insurance. It is now, after midnight. To-day, we expect without doubt to get possession of the money, and shall immediately lie ourselves to parts unknown."

"Fearing that you might interfere with our plans, before we all quit this house, we shall shut you in the cellar, where you are in no wise likely to be disturbed, for days to come. Few people ever come here, and none are likely to, as the old woman is going with us. So, you see you will have ample time to deliberate over life's uncertainties—especially those of a detective's life."

"The girl, Norine, we shall take with us, to safer quarters, till we get the boodle. Then, she will be set at liberty. Now, then, how do you like the prospect?"

"It is about equal to what I expected of you," Dick replied, grimly. "All I can say is, go ahead

with your apple-cart. I may get free yet, in time to trip you."

"Not likely!" Dudley replied. "To prevent your passing the next few hours in sleeplessness, I'll chloroform you."

Dick made no reply, but his eyes flashed defiance, and his teeth were set.

Was he, after all, to lose the game he had worked so hard to win?

"You'd better search him, before you chuck him in the cellar!" serenely suggested Miss Maggie Malone. "He may have some more wealth about his duds."

"Sure enough!"

And kneeling beside the prisoner, Dudley proceeded to go through his pockets, deliberately.

All he got for his trouble, was a few dollars.

Dick had wisely taken the precaution to leave the balance of his money and his diamond pin in the hotel safe.

With a growl, Dudley put what money he did get in his pocket, and produced a bottle and sponge, the former filled with chloroform.

Saturating the sponge, he held it to Deadwood Dick's nose.

The Western detective held out manfully, but was at last forced to succumb to the drug, and was soon oblivious of his surroundings.

He was then raised by Dudley and Bill Hanover, and carried down a narrow stairway, into the cellar, where he was laid upon the hard bottom.

It was a dark, cheerless prison, but of course, Dick knew naught of this.

Leaving him lying there, the two villains ascended to the kitchen, and locked the cellar door.

"Now, then, one more job of this sort, and then, we're all O.K.," Dudley announced.

"You can attend to that, I reckon. It's time I was getting back into the city, I've filled my part of the bill, I guess," Hanover said.

"You have, and done it nobly. I believe I agreed to give you fifty dollars?"

"Yes, but the job ought to be worth double that."

"Oh! well, you shall not go 'way dissatisfied. Here's a hundred."

"Much obliged. I'll be going, now. Success to you, old pal!"

And after a hand-shake all around; Hanover left the house.

When he was gone, Dudley and Maggie went upstairs.

The former carried the chloroform, and sponge, and the latter a lamp.

At the door of the upper front room, they paused and listened.

Within, all was quiet.

"Sh! Maybe she's asleep; and we'll have no trouble," Dudley said.

"I hope so!" Maggie answered.

Dudley cautiously inserted a key in the lock, turned it, and then opened the door.

He and Maggie then entered, and the door was locked behind them.

The lamplight illuminated the room.

Seated upon a chair, with her face buried in her hands, was the prisoner.

She was about the size of the Malone girl, and when she raised her face to gaze at the intruders, it was to be seen that she was marvelously beautiful, although her face was now tear-stained and her eyes swollen from weeping.

She quickly arose to her feet, her eyes flashing.

"You here again?" she gasped. "Is it not enough that I am a prisoner, that you should intrude your detestable—"

"Softly! softly, my dear!" Dudley said mockingly. "You should not get excited over nothing. Your term of imprisonment is pretty near at an end. Indeed, we have come now, to take you over to New York, and in a couple of days more, you will be at liberty, just as safe and sound as you were when you came on from Philadelphia."

"Tell me why I am thus shut up!"

"Oh! I cannot do that. You will find that out, all in good time."

"What are you going to do with that bottle and sponge, sir?"

"Why, you see, in order to safely remove you from here, it becomes necessary for us to chloroform you!"

"Oh! have mercy! have mercy!"

"Sorry, sis, but that's out of the question. We're not dabbling in that sort of stock. You might as well submit, quietly, for resistance will do no good."

"I'll not submit. I'll resist till the last minute!"

Dudley laughed grimly.

He saturated the sponge well with the anesthetic and handing the bottle to Mag, he leaped forward, and seized Norine in his embrace.

She struggled and fought him like a young tigress, but his superior strength overcame her, and he held the chloroform firmly to her nose.

Of course, then, it was a matter of but a few minutes ere she became insensible.

She was then carried down-stairs.

About three o'clock the cab arrived, and she was placed in it. The house was then shut up, and Dudley, Maggie, and Mrs. Malone got into the conveyance, which was driven rapidly away, in the direction of Hoboken.

When the cab was out of sight and hearing, a figure glided up to the house.

It was Isaac Lowenstein.

"So they've gone!" he muttered. "Fergus Fleming is in the cellar, in an insensible condition. This is bad. It will likely take me some time to bring him to. The first thing, is to get into the house. It isn't far from morning, and what I do, must be done quickly!"

He took a tour about the house, and then tried the weakest door.

"I guess I'll have to burst it in!" he said, aloud. Just then, a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder!

CHAPTER XIII.

TO THE RESCUE.

If he had been shot, Isaac could not have been more surprised, when he felt the heavy hand fall upon his shoulder. He instantly wheeled around, to behold a six-foot uniformed policeman.

And standing there in the gloom of the starless night, the two surveyed each, inquiringly.

"Well, young man, what are you doing here?" the officer demanded, sternly. "Caught you at it, didn't I?"

"So it appears!" Isaac replied. "I didn't suppose it would be my good fortune to find a cop prowling about this neighborhood."

"Your good fortune, eh?"

"Certainly. If I had known you were about, I should have called upon you to break in this door, instead of trying it myself."

"The deuce you say!" sarcastically. "Now, come off! You can't work that game on me. I've got you, and you can't escape!"

"Don't let that worry you. I'm in no hurry to escape from here until I can rescue my friend from this house."

"Your friend?"

"Exactly. But before I tell you any more, will you kindly tell me what you're doing 'way out here?"

"Humph! I don't know as it concerns you. However, if it will do you any good to know, there's a couple of this force takes turns watching this vicinity."

"For Maggie Malone?"

"Eh!" The cop seemed surprised.

"For Maggie Malone, I say?"

"Yes. What do you know about her?"

"More than you think. Will you give me a chance to explain?"

"Go ahead."

"Well, a friend, who is a detective, got wind that Maggie was out here, to-night, and came out to arrest her. Before he got here, as I have since learned, he was knocked down, and made a prisoner by Maggie's pals."

"Fearing my friend might get into trouble, I came out here also, on the sly, to be near at hand, in case my friend needed help. I found my friend was a prisoner, by listening at the window, and that the whole party intended to skip for New York, by way of the Christopher Street Ferry. They chloroformed my friend, so he could not give chase, and not long ago, a hack came for them, and they locked up the house, and cleared out, taking with them a drugged girl. I was just trying to burst into the house, to rescue my friend, when you came up!"

The cop gave vent to a prolonged whistle.

"I thought I heard carriage wheels over this direction a bit ago!" he acknowledged, "and I know the Malones are a hard crowd, but sure's my name's John Jones, I b'lieve yer tryin' to stuff me."

"If you doubt my word, sir, open the house, go down into the cellar, and see for yourself."

"And give you a chance to slide off!"

"By no means. I will walk in front of you."

The officer reflected a moment.

"Your name?" he demanded.

"Isaac Lowenstein."

"Your friend's name?"

"Fergus Fleming."

"And you say the old woman and all, has gone?"

"Yes, every one of them."

Advancing to the door, Jones rapped loudly on it with his club.

"Hello! Wake up in there!" he shouted.

Isaac laughed.

"You're wasting your wind," he commented.

Without reply the officer repeated the operation several times.

Then he gave vent to a grunt of anger.

"I guess you're about right!" he growled. "I'll soon see!"

He put one of his broad shoulders against the door, and burst it open as easily as though it had been a pane of glass.

He then entered the kitchen, Isaac following.

A match was struck, and the lamp on the table lit.

"Hello! what's that?" the officer cried, spying a pool of clotted blood on the floor.

"That came from my friend's head, where he was hit," Isaac explained.

They took the lamp, unbarred the cellar door, and went down.

There, sure enough, lay Fergus Fleming, *alias* Deadwood Dick, on the cellar bottom.

His eyes were closed and he was breathing heavily.

The smell of chloroform clung to his breath.

"You take the lamp!" Jones said, "and I'll soon have him out of this."

Isaac obeyed, and Dick was carried up-stairs by the brawny policeman as easily as though he had been a baby.

He was laid upon the floor, and Jones set to work to restore him to consciousness.

By application of water, Dick was restored to a semi-conscious condition.

"Now, if I had a little whisky, it would do an immense sight of good!" Jones said. "Look around and see if you can't find some, for I know the old woman was a regular old guzzler."

Isaac obeyed, with alacrity, and from a closet soon brought forth a bottle of liquor labeled:

"BEST OLD IRISH WHISKY."

Jones sampled it, smacked his lips, and then sampled it again, ending by pronouncing it the genuine stuff.

He then poured a little of it between Dick's lips, and a few drops on the wound.

The effect was almost electrical, for the detective opened his eyes, sat up, and gazed about him.

Jones had previously removed the straps that bound him, so that he was now free.

When his gaze rested upon Isaac, his face lit up, and he with difficulty gained his feet.

"You here, Isaac?" he ejaculated.

"Yes, Mr. Fleming. I tracked Maggie Malone here, and thus, fortunately, was here to rescue you!"

"You are a good pard!" Dick said, gratefully. "I'll see you never regret your faithfulness. Have they gone?"

"Yes, some time ago. I could not hinder them—they were too many for me. So I made no attempt."

"Then the trail is lost!" Dick groaned.

"Not so, my friend. I got here before you did, and learned much by listening that I never knew before. I know where they are going, and before another night you can have them in jail, if you choose. As soon as you feel able, we will start at once for New York."

"I am able, now!" Dick said. "The exercise of walking will do me good."

"And as for me," said Jones, "it's purty near time for me to go off duty, so I'll stay and look after the widow's house, and see that no one don't get away with this whisky—except myself."

Model policeman!

Deadwood Dick and Isaac at once set out on foot into the city, toward the ferry.

On the way Isaac recited his adventures since he had seen Dick at the Palm Garden, even to what he had heard at the Malone dwelling, giving all particulars in a clear and concise manner.

Dick could hardly find words to express his gratitude, and in turn gave the young Hebrew a detailed account of his experience since he left Philadelphia, even to unfolding to him the insurance plot.

It was broad day when they arrived on the New York side of the river, and the first thing they aimed for was an eating-room, where they spent some time in satisfying their appetites.

Then they went to Deadwood Dick's room at the hotel, where they enjoyed a couple of cigars over a conference.

"Lowenstein," Dick said, "you have so won my esteem that I want you to continue on with me in this case, and if there is any pecuniary consideration to be derived, we will share and share alike."

"If I can be of any assistance to you, sir, you may command me," Isaac replied, respectfully.

"I've no doubt you can. And now, in regard to this Jack Clinker's place, where Dudley and his gang have gone—what sort of a den is it?"

"About as bad as any I know of in the city. It is a regular nest for thieves and scoundrels of all classes, as well as both sexes. It's a four-story place, and the ground floor is a free-and-easy saloon, catering to the roughest class. Not many women, if any, frequent the saloon, for they would be brutally ill-treated."

"There is a side entrance, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes; that's always open, and one that ain't afraid of getting knifed can roam all through the upper halls. I wouldn't like to try it. More than one bleeding chap has emerged from the lower doorway."

"Indeed! Now, if this is so, the chances of getting possession of Norine look rather slim."

"They do indeed. It looks to me as if she had best be left alone until Dudley and Malone are arrested."

"No, no! She might be put out of the way altogether then."

"That's so. The sharks in that den cling to one another like sisters and brothers."

It was indeed a dismal outlook, and the more they discussed the matter the less encouraging it grew.

"Well, one thing is certain," Dick said. "Something must be done, and done at once. I see no prospect of getting at the girl now, and we must do the next best thing. The insurance company must put Dudley and Malone off till to-morrow."

"Ah! so we can have to-day and to-night to work in."

"Exactly. I will write them a note, and you can take it to them."

He sat down and wrote rapidly, with the following result:

"Matters in the Norval insurance case are deepening, and I have facts that, on to-morrow, will most likely save your company \$5,000. The woman who is represented to you to be Norine Norval is nothing of the kind; but the real Norine Norval is in this city, a captive in the power of the two conspirators who are trying to swindle you out of the insurance money, since Wallace Norval is not dead."

"Now, what I request of you is this:

"When Dudley and the young woman come to-day for the money, put them off with some excuse that will not arouse their suspicions, and tell them to come to-morrow, and there will be no further delay."

"By to-morrow I will have the real Norine, if I have to call on the police, and produce her before you, and arrest this precious pair of crooks, who are among the most noted in the city."

"FERGUS FLEMING, Detective."

This message was delivered by Isaac.

An hour later Dick was waited upon by the president and auditor of the company, and at their request, he explained everything that is known to the

reader, doing it so clearly and concisely as to satisfy any doubts they may have entertained.

"For a disinterested party, you have certainly shown unprecedented energy and detective ability," the president said, on departing, "and you shall not go away from New York without a suitable recompense for your services."

CHAPTER XIV.

"WORKING UP" HANOVER.

ASSURED on the point of Dudley's failing to get the insurance money, Deadwood Dick felt somewhat easier, and he and Isaac Lowenstein spent the forenoon in endeavoring to form some feasible plan for the rescue of Norine Norval, but Jack Clinker's was such a disreputable and dangerous den, that it was hard to conceive any plan by which a rescue could be effected without entailing discovery.

Just about noon, Isaac, of his own accord, took a trip down to the vicinity of the den, in order to get the lay of the land.

When he returned, he shook his head discouragingly.

"I went down there," he said, "but that's all the good it did. The place is just the same as ever, only, if anything, worse. I didn't venture in, for there was a fight going on inside, and it was worth one's life to get mixed up in it."

"Are there no police in the neighborhood?"

"Oh! there's one on the corner, but he's been there for years, and is deaf, dumb and blind as to anything that's going on in Clinker's place."

"I wonder how a police raid would do?—but then, that would scare away our game."

"Of course!"

Dick spent some time in thought, and then, he suddenly slapped his knee, and his countenance lit up.

"By Jove! I believe I have it!" he ejaculated.

"If you have, let's have a bite!" Isaac smiled.

"Of course I will. Here's my idea. You know that Bill Hanover, according to what Dudley said, was formerly a crook, and for that matter is yet. He has occupied a subordinate position in his uncle's office. Do you suppose he would go back there, after the events of last night?"

"I shouldn't think he would, though such a thing might be possible."

"So I have thought, he calculating that if a charge were made against him, he could prove an alibi."

"Well, I'm going to try a new racket. I'm going to telegraph him to come to the United States Hotel at once, on important business, and sign it 'Colonel D. D.' Do you think it will work?"

"Perhaps. It's worth trying. When he comes to the hotel—"

"We will be in the office, and force him into an interview, under penalty of arrest. Then I'll talk turkey to him, and convince him that the only way to avoid a term of years in State's prison will be to go and get the girl for us."

"To-night?"

"Yes."

"But, would that be advisable? If the girl is rescued to-night, Dudley and Maggie might be alarmed, and give us the slip, without giving us any further chance to get them."

"True enough! true enough. She cannot, then, safely be rescued until—"

"To-morrow, when we are satisfied Dudley and Maggie have started out to get the insurance. Then, Hanover must rescue her, providing we can fetch him to terms."

"I have it. If we can scare him, he can go to Clinker's to-night, and mingle with the gang. To-morrow, he can go and get the girl, saying Dudley sent him. I think it will work."

There was nothing like trying it at any rate.

So leaving the hotel, they made their way toward the nearest telegraph-office.

They had not reached it, yet, when Deadwood Dick suddenly clapped Isaac on the shoulder, with the exclamation:

"There he is, now!"

Sure enough, on the opposite side of the street, Hanover was to be seen, skulking along among the crowd, as if he were afraid of being seen, his course being down-town.

"Yes, that is the scoundrel, sure enough!" Isaac admitted. "He acts as if he were afraid some one would see him."

"Yes, he has a guilty look. Come! We must not miss this opportunity."

They crossed the street, and followed sharply after the fellow.

They were not long in overtaking him, when Dick laid his hand upon his shoulder, and by a powerful grip caused him suddenly to face about.

"Slow up!" Dick said, sternly. "I want to have a little private conversation with you."

Hanover uttered a startled oath as he saw the detective, and attempted to wrench away, but the grasp that held him was firm.

"Let me go!" he gasped—hissed, rather.

"Not until I have had a talk with you. Come right along without resistance, or into the cooler you go, in a jiffy. I'm talkin' business now."

"What d'ye want?" Bill demanded.

"You come along to some beer-garden, and you'll find out. Walk!"

"Take off your hand and I'll go."

"Correct. Make an attempt to escape me, and I'll put a bullet through you."

They crossed over into the Bowery, and soon found a beer-garden where there were plenty of seats, and but few to occupy them, at that hour of the day.

Here they became seated about a table.

Hanover was pale and sidgety, and had a guilty, sheepish look.

"Well, what do you want?" he demanded, after they were seated.

"I want to know if you don't feel rather shaky in your boots?" Dick replied.

"Why so?"

"Because you see a long term of imprisonment staring you in the face."

"I don't see it yet," doggedly.

"You don't, eh? Why, you don't for a moment suppose you're going to escape, do you?"

"What have I done, pray?"

Dick laughed, dryly.

"That won't work, Fox-eye!" he declared, convincingly. "That little escapade of yours last night was the last straw that broke the camel's back. That little tap you gave me on the cranium I didn't mind so much, as I'm noted for a tough skull. But your complicity with Dudley and the Malones settled the whole business, and when inspector Byrnes wanted to know if I thought I could lay hands on you, I told him I thought I could."

Hanover shut his teeth together and remained silent, while Deadwood Dick, feeling his way as a blind man might do, went on to say:

"You see, Hanover, that old Metropolitan grudge ain't wiped out yet, by a long shot, and you are wanted just as much to-day as before you changed your residence to Jersey City. Of course you know what your arrest, over here, signifies—not less than a year at hard labor, the very lightest penalty."

"Bah! You are only gassing. I've been over here scores of times and no one ever bothered me."

"That may be. You didn't have me pitted against you then. That was an unlucky thing for you to do, last night. Of course you made an even hundred by the job, but what of that? What's a hundred dollars to liberty—bah! nothing!"

"How do you know I got a hundred dollars?" Hanover demanded, grimly.

"Because my friend here overheard the transaction between you and Dudley."

"He set you at liberty, then?"

"Yes."

Hanover grated his teeth.

"I thought it was poor policy to leave you shut up in the house. If it had been me I'd have fixed it different, I'll bet a cracker!"

"You'd have put a knife through me, eh?"

The villain made no answer, but his grim silence seemed to indicate that Dick had guessed aright.

"Oh! I know you're equal to any crime!" Dick said. "But when you get over on the Island, or up at Sing Sing, whichever place they choose to send you to, you'll have a chance to reflect over the folly of your ways. It may be you'll have Dudley for company."

"Bah! You'll not get him!"

"Won't I? The trap is all laid, and he'll be bagged at the insurance office to-morrow, in company with Miss Maggie."

"You don't know where they are."

"Mistaken again. They are at Jack Clinker's."

"Indeed! I'd like to know how the devil you have got your news?"

"That don't matter."

Here Dick glanced at the clock on the wall.

"It's pretty near time the officers came, ain't it, Isaac?"

"They were to be here at three," Isaac replied—"twenty minutes yet."

"What officers?" Hanover quickly demanded.

"Why, I sent to the chief of police to send a couple of special officers here, so that in case I ran you down, they could take charge of you."

"For God's sake, you are not really going to give me up, are you?"

"Why, certainly! Why should I not? I am sure you richly deserve it."

"Maybe I do; but, for the love of Heaven have mercy on me!"

"Pray illustrate why I should have mercy on you, scoundrel that you are?"

"Because I have been trying to reform. From the time I went over to Jersey City to live, up to yesterday, I have not been guilty of any bad act, and am well thought of over there. I am engaged to be married to an estimable young lady, of good family, and my arrest would kill all my chances."

"Then, why did you abet Dudley and Maggie?"

"Perhaps God knows—/ don't. I saw that they were in danger, and the devil prompted me to help them out of the scrape. I have been sorry since that I did, and have felt so guilty that I've not dared to show my face in Jersey City."

The man spoke with a depth of feeling in his tone which proved that he meant what he said—that he was really sorry for what he had done.

"I don't hardly credit this repentance," Dick said, eying the crook, searchingly. "It don't sound right."

"I mean it, as sure as there is a God in heaven, sir. I love the girl to whom I am engaged, and in her is based my future hope of peace, happiness, and a better life. To arrest me, and cast me into prison—for I know I'd get no baby sentence, owing to old scores—would be to wrest from me all courage for the better, and serve to send me headlong down to perdition!"

"Supposing I were to give you a chance—"

"I would grasp it, as a drowning man would clutch at a straw."

Deadwood Dick appeared to reflect, and glanced again at the clock.

"It is said first thought is always best," he observed, "and I don't think it would be safe to trust you. Your past is too dark."

"No need to tell me that. I know it has not been

above reproach, but does that signify that I cannot lead a better life?"

"You tried it you say, and failed."

"True; but give me a trial, and I'll wager my head I'll not fail again."

"Well, now, see here. If I do not hand you over to the officers, will you assist me?"

"Certainly. What is it you want done?"

"I want you to rescue the girl, Norine Norval, from the custody of Dudley!"

Hanover whistled.

"I can try it—will try it. But it's a bigger thing to do than you may suppose."

"You're on good terms with Dudley and Maggie?"

"Yes."

"And are known at Clinker's?"

"Yes. I think perhaps I can work it. When do you want the girl?"

"I will tell you. I have notified the insurance company to put Malone off till ten to-morrow, to give me a chance to produce the girl, Norine. Dudley and Maggie will leave Clinker's about nine, probably. The girl must be liberated as soon as they leave."

"I see. Now, let me see how that will work!"

Hanover appeared absorbed in meditation for several minutes.

"I reckon I can work it all right," he said, "but I shall doubtless need some help. The girl will likely be left in old Biddy Malone's charge, and I'll give you my word she's an old terrier. Now, here's a plan that I reckon might work all right. Being a detective, you know how to disguise yourself?"

"I can make up beyond recognition."

"Well, you disguise yourself, and we will go to Clinker's to-night, and mingle with the boys. You want to have a few dollars to spend on drinks. I'll introduce you as 'the Judge,' an old-time pal of mine, from Chicago, and you'll get along all right."

"But what's the object in this?"

"One object is to familiarize yourself with the place, and the boys, so that if you are seen around there to-morrow, you won't be set down as a detective. See?"

"Correct."

"Well, we'll likely see Dudley about the place, and after introducing you, I'll put a flea in his ear that you've got a big thing on foot, to crack a fat crib, up on Sixty-second street, day after to-morrow night, and want a couple of trusty pals as helpers. Then, I'll propose we adjourn to Dudley's room, to talk over the thing."

"Do you think the plan will work?"

"Certainly. He'll bite like a crab. He loves money better than any man I know. Once in his room, we can form some idea where the girl is, so as to make the pull for her, to-morrow."

"But, about the burglary?"

"If you play your part good, all will be well. There's an old bachelor miser lives up on West Sixty-second street, who is reputed to have many thousand dollars stored away in his house. His name is Peter Paulding. You can allow that you have found where he keeps the booty, and if we join you, you will divide even. Then, after a chat, we'll withdraw. To-morrow, I'll be at Clinker's early, a-drinkin', and when you see Mag and Dudley light out, you come over, and we'll get the girl, if we have to clean out the shebang."

"Where shall I meet you, to-night?"

"At the corner of Canal and Chrystie street, at eight, to-night. If I don't know you when you come along, say 'Keno,' and I'll drop to you. And, now, you'd better keep shady, lest Dudley finds you are free, and is on his guard."

"Oh! I'll look out for that. As for my companion here, he goes to Philadelphia, this afternoon, for proofs of Norine's identity, and will not be back 'til to-morrow. I'll keep away from the Sinclair House as much as possible, and join you to-night."

"Then, I suppose I am at liberty to go?"

"Yes. If you do the square thing all will be well. If you don't, I'll put you in prison if it costs me twenty years of search for you!"

"You need not fear. I will act fair and square."

CHAPTER XV.

IN THE THIEVES DEN.—THE BLOW.

HANOVER then arose and took his departure. When he was gone, Dick and Isaac sat a few minutes, regarding each other inquiringly.

"Well!" Dick said, at length, "what's your opinion?"

"I don't know," the young Hebrew replied, "but it occurred to me that that drive about my going to Philadelphia, was pretty good."

"Yes. It literally takes you out of the town, with no danger of your interference, until some time to-morrow."

"So I see. But, the object? Have you not placed entire confidence in Hanover?"

"By no means. I may be mistaken in him, but I shall not fully trust him, until I find him square."

"How about that visit to Clinker's? I suppose you will go?"

"No. It wouldn't be policy. I might get into a trap that would be harder to get out of than that at the Malone house."

"But, what will you do?"

"I shall have to provide a substitute. How would you like to take my place?"

Isaac looked doubtful, for a moment.

"I'm afraid I wouldn't answer."

"Why not? You and I are just about of a size, and you speak as good English as I, if not better. I could fix you up so that Hanover would not know the difference. Our voices, too, are alike. As for

the rest, you heard Hanover's reference to Peter Paulding, the burglary, and so forth. You can make up the rest as well as I."

"Supposing it is a trap?"

"Why, about all there'll be of it, they'd hold you a prisoner—likely lock you up in a room. I don't believe they'd even remove the disguise. As for personal danger, I should not fear that, as they'd not dare kill you."

"I don't know. It's a hard den."

"Even so, deliberate murder is something the most hardened wretches hesitate at. I shall give you three hours at Clinker's, and you must govern your time, accordingly. If you are not out of there by that time, I'll know the reason why."

"You will not venture in, single handed?"

"No. I will have backing!"

"Well, I'll go. I think perhaps I can play the part all right."

"I am satisfied you can. Indeed, I would hesitate about trusting any one else."

"Well, I'll do my best."

"That's all any one could do. You go to the United States Hotel, where I will locate for the present, and I'll join you, pretty soon, get a room and fix up your disguise."

Accordingly, they separated.

Dick had several errands to attend to.

One of the first, was to repair to the Sinclair House, where he procured his sachel, paid his bill, and took leave.

He then repaired to the costumer's, where he had previously obtained the bummers' disguise.

This he secured for young Lowenstein, together with necessary paints, etc., for "making up," and also procured a disguise for himself.

These, with his sachel, he had sent to the United States Hotel.

He then made his way to the office of the company that had insured Wallace Norval's life.

As luck would have it, he found the president in, and was cordially received.

"Well, Mr. Fleming, have you unearthed any new developments in the case?"

"I have arranged to have my partner enter the wolves' den, where Norine Norval is confined, to-night," Deadwood Dick replied. "This is but a preliminary to the rescue, to-morrow. Were Dudley and the young woman here?"

"Yes. They were told that Mr. Barnes, the vice-president, had been called out of town—which is true—and nothing could be done until to-morrow; at ten, when their case would be settled."

Dick smiled.

"If things work right their case will be settled," he said. "How did they take the delay?"

"Oh! with good grace. The prospect of surely getting the five thousand dollars to-morrow, was a great panacea to their disappointment in not getting it to-day."

"They did not appear anxious or distrustful?"

"Not that I could observe, and I am a pretty good reader of character. But about this friend of yours: is he not running considerable risk?"

"It was about that, that I came to see you. He is undoubtedly entering a dangerous den, and may possibly fall into a trap. In case he does, matters must needs be wound up differently from what I had calculated on. I shall know by the length of his stay in the place, whether he gets into trouble or not."

"And if he does?"

"He and Norine must be rescued, and Dudley and the false Norine arrested."

"What place did you say this was?"

"Jack Clinker's, on Water street."

"I think I've heard of it. A regular thieves' nest, eh?"

"Yes."

"Then you will have to have some assistance from the police?"

"Yes. I am, you understand, merely a private detective, and it would do me no good to call for assistance, without some authority. I thought, possibly, you being a gentleman of prominence, you—"

"I can fix it!" the president said, reaching for his hat. "The chief of police is a personal friend of mine, and you shall have the power you need and justly deserve."

They left the office, entered the president's private equipage, and were driven to the office of the chief of police.

Leaving Dick in the outer office the president entered the inner one, and held a private conference with the chief.

Shortly, Dick was called in, and within half an hour he was a full-fledged metropolitan detective, and had the assurance of the chief that any call of his for police to raid the place of Jack Clinker would be promptly responded to.

Highly pleased with the honor thus conferred upon him, Dick then went to the United States Hotel, and found Isaac and his baggage already there.

A room was secured, and then the two began to get the matter of disguises under way.

When Isaac had donned the suit Dick had previously worn, and was adorned with the whiskers, and touched up with paint, Dick had to set down on the bed and roar with laughter, for Isaac, naturally good-looking, was now a most bummy individual. His own mother nor most intimate acquaintances would have known him.

"Oh, but you're a master!" Dick laughed. "I don't know but what I ought to provide you a body-guard to keep the girls away from you."

Isaac was forced to laugh when he surveyed himself in the glass.

"I am so changed that I almost forget how I originally looked," he said.

"Then you've no doubt but what you can go through with your part?"

"I feel twice as confident as I did before."

Dick then proceeded to disguise himself, and did it so cleverly that his identity was well lost.

He wore a flowing beard of the color of his own mustache, a silk hat, eye-glasses, and a full-dress suit of clothes, and had the appearance of a man of five-and-forty years—looked like a Wall street stock-broker, as Isaac admiringly commented.

When their disguises were perfect, there was little or nothing for our friends to do but await the coming of night.

It would not be a long wait, for the afternoon was already well spent.

The spare time was passed in discussing the probable result of Isaac's visit to Clinker's den.

Would Bill Hanover prove treacherous, or could his word be relied on?

It was a question hard to answer, with odds in favor of his laying a trap to ensnare the man he had promised to deal squarely with.

At last the hour arrived for Isaac to set forth on his perilous mission, and shaking hands with Deadwood Dick, as they stood in front of the hotel, he strode away with a firm step.

"He has plenty of grit!" Dick muttered, "and he will go through with it if any one can."

When Isaac arrived in the vicinity of Canal and Chrystie streets, he espied Bill Hanover waiting on one corner under a lamp-post.

There was no perceptible change in the fellow's appearance.

He watched Isaac narrowly as he approached, as if he thought he recognized him.

Instead of making himself immediately known, Isaac walked straight on past the crook, scarcely deigning him a glance, and turned down Canal street a ways.

Then he retraced his steps, and found Hanover looking up Chrystie street expectantly.

Isaac's quiet laugh gave him a start.

"Who are you?" he demanded, grimly.

"Kenoi!"

"Ah! I thought so, when I saw you coming; but when you passed by, I changed my mind. Are you all ready?"

"I am. How is the lay of the land at Clinker's?"

"There you have me. I've kept shy of the place for fear I might run against Dudley, and he'd smell a rat. I guess things will be running about as usual if there's any fightin'. You keep out of it. Did you send your partner to Phila?"

"Hours ago."

"When will he be back?"

"About ten to-morrow."

"Well, I guess we'd better move along toward Clinker's, and see what's going on there. Are you armed?"

"No."

"That's bad! Might get into trouble, you see, and need to shoot. However, I have a pistol, and I guess we will get along all right."

They then walked along, and in due time arrived in the immediate vicinity of Jack Clinker's place.

There was a dim light in the saloon, the entrance to which was guarded by a screen-door, and from inside came the sounds of coarse voices and profanity, mingled with the clinking of glasses.

"The gang's all present, I guess," Hanover said, "but they ain't got filled up yet. Come, let's make a break before they do."

And he led the way.

Not without some feelings of trepidation did Isaac follow, and they entered the saloon.

Bill Hanover was at once greeted with familiar exclamations by the score of bummers and desperate-looking customers present.

Evidently he was well and generally known to the habitués of the resort.

After he had exchanged greetings with the gang, Bill introduced Isaac.

"Fellers, this is an old-time chum of mine—Jake Juggler, from Chicago, an' as square a cove as ever ye fell in with. Hi! Jakey, boy, these aire all my cousins. Can't ye say suthin'?"

"I say whisky!" Jake promptly responded, at which there was a shout of approval, and the game-eyed bartender set out the long-necked bottle.

This obviated the necessity of shaking hands, a thing that the pseudo Jacob was heartily glad of.

Two rounds of drinks were had, and then, while Bill and Isaac were looking at the pictures, with which the room was liberally decorated, Delos entered, from the rear.

Hanover at once stepped forward, and greeted him, effusively, and introduced Isaac.

Then, after Dudley had had a drink at the bar, he and Hanover stepped to one side, and held a conversation that lasted for several minutes.

Hanover then motioned for Isaac to approach.

"I've been tellin' Mr. Dudley, here, about what an expert cracksmen you are," he said, "and about how you propose to make a haul, up on Sixty-second street. If you'll step up to the colonel's room, we'll talk the matter over, at length."

"Kerect!" Isaac replied. "I'm with ye."

They then passed out of the saloon, into a dirty hall, and ascended a flight of stairs; then followed a winding hall, and at the rear of the building, ascended another flight of stairs; after traversing another dark hall, they ascended still another flight, and were in the fourth story, at the rear, the stairs ending about at the center of the building.

From here, a narrow hall ran forward to the front of the building, and on either side, were apartments partitioned off with matched boards.

A wall light burned dimly at the further end of the hall, and Isaac was able to estimate that there

were probably fourteen small apartments, on that floor.

Dudley led the way, half the distance down the hall, and then paused, and unlocked a door.

All hands entered a room, that was small, close, and dark.

Dudley fumbled around, for a few minutes, and then uttered an oath.

"I'll be cursed if there's a sign of any candle here!" he growled. "Feel around and get yourselves something to set on, and I'll go down, and make a raise of a light."

And with these words, he left the room, leaving the door standing open.

When his footsteps had died out, along the hall, Hanover struck a match, and by its light, he and Isaac took a survey of the apartment.

It was about twelve by fourteen feet, in size, uncarpeted, and contained only a cot bed, a couple of rickety chairs, and a table.

"This is the room where Jim Styles was nearly murdered!" was Hanover's comforting announcement, in a whisper. "See that door? I'll wager there's where the women are."

The match then went out.

The door he had mentioned communicated with an adjoining apartment.

A moment later, Hanover whispered:

"Sit still! I'm going to sneak along the hall, and listen at the doors. I'll be back before Dudley comes."

Then he glided from the room.

Isaac expected to hear the door slam shut after him, as much as he ever expected anything in his life. But it didn't. Was Hanover really going to act square?

Isaac could not bring himself to believe it.

He arose, and stole cautiously to the door, and peered out.

The hall was sufficiently light for him to see to either end of it.

Sure enough, he saw Hanover stealing along from door to door, listening at the keyholes.

With considerable curiosity, Isaac watched him, and was thus engaged, when he received a heavy blow upon the back of his head, that sent him forward upon his face.

In vain he essayed to rise; a deathly feeling came over him, and then he knew no more.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN THE WELL.

Of course, young Lowenstein had no means of knowing how long he had been unconscious, when he once more awoke to reason.

He realized that he was lying flat upon his back, that he was in utter darkness, and that there was a dull aching pain in his head.

More than this, it was impossible for him to realize, for some time.

Then, feeling a little clearer in mind, he made an effort to rise to a sitting posture, and discovered that he was not bound.

This was a great surprise, and was followed by another, when, on feeling of his face, he found that his false beard had not been disturbed.

"Hanover played me false, after all!" he mused, "just as I feared. I wonder where I am?"

Searching his pockets he found that what money he had brought with him to Clinker's, was gone, but they had not appropriated his match-box, which he had taken the precaution to fill with matches; hence he was able to strike a light, to see what sort of a place he was in.

When he did so, and glanced around him, an exclamation of astonishment escaped him.

He was in what appeared to be a cistern, for it was a circular place, not very large, but quite deep, for far above him was a floor.

If the place had been built for a cistern—and it evidently had, for the bottom and circular wall had been cemented—it had not lately contained water, for nowhere was there any perceptible dampness.

It was not the character of his place of confinement that had elicited the exclamation from Isaac. It was something else more unexpected.

Upon the hard bottom, but a few feet from where the Hebrew stood, lay no less a personage than Bill Hanover!

His face was bruised and bloody, and there was an ugly gash, on the top of his head.

He lay there, gazing at Isaac, steadily, until the match expired, without uttering a word.

"Good God! are you badly hurt, Bill?" Isaac demanded, kneeling beside him, and striking another light.

"Not seriously," was the grim reply, "though I feel blamed sore. They must have tumbled me down into this pit, without regard to whether I broke my neck or not."

"Didn't you know it, when you were thrown down?"

"Nixy. I got the life nigh clubbed out of me before I would give in."

"Did you see me fall?"

"Yes, or I heard you fall, and turned to look, and see what was the matter. Just then, Dudley sprung out of one of the rooms, and gave me a lick with a billy, that fetched me to my knees."

He wheeled about and grappled with him, and we had it hot and heavy for a few minutes; but Mag came to his assistance, and gave me another belt over the head, and that settled me. I knew no more, till a few minutes ago, when I returned to consciousness."

"Guess you thought I'd gone back on you?"

"It looked like it."

"You were suspicious of me, before."

"How do you know?"

"Oh! I know. Fleming didn't trust me, or he'd have come himself. As it was, he suspected I'd side

in with Dudley, and set a trap. So he sent you, and remained behind, so he could come to the rescue, in case you did not return. Am I not right?"

"Yes. But, how did you find out?"

"I surmised. I knew you wasn't Fleming the minute I heard your voice."

"Well, we're in a hole."

"You bet. What's more, there is no possibility of our getting out, unless we have assistance."

"Why, how deep is it?"

"Fifteen feet."

"Phew! Then we couldn't do any good, one standing on the other's shoulders?"

"No."

"Is there an opening, above?"

"Yes—a trap door."

"Where does it lead to?"

"Sort of a store-room, in the rear of the bar-room, where Clinker keeps his whisky barrels. There's no use of talking, we can't get out of here till we are let out!"

"And the chances of Fergus Fleming finding us, should he raid the place—"

"Are most decidedly slim, let me tell you."

"How so? Would not a thorough search be made?"

"Without doubt. But, a person could pass over the trap a dozen times, without becoming aware of its existence, as there is no ring fastened to it. Then, too, Clinker used to keep a barrel standing over it."

"Then, what are we going to do?"

"The easiest thing in the world—*nothing!* There's no use of working ourselves into a sweat, hollering, or crying. We're here, and here we're liable to stay, until some one takes compassion on us, and lets us out."

The situation did indeed look gloomy. Not only were they in blackest darkness, but there was scarcely any air in the place, and no way for any to get in.

A few hours would suffice for them to absorb all of the oxygen, and then, suffocation must inevitably ensue.

"I feel sure if Mr. Fleming raids the building, he'll never give up until he finds us," Isaac said. "He is a man of great determination."

"I only hope his determination will reach down this deep!" Hanover declared, grimly. "I'm seriously afraid it won't."

"Well, time will tell. We must have been insensible for some time, and it ought to be time Fleming was looking for us, now."

"We can only guess at that. We may have been unconscious for hours, or only for a few minutes."

"That is so. How do you suppose Dudley came to tumble to us?"

"Oh! I don't know. He is naturally a suspicious cuss, and as sharp-eyed as a hawk. No doubt he was on the watch for danger, and when he saw you put you down as a detective, and naturally concluded that I had turned against him."

"Well, there's one satisfaction—they can't get the insurance. Fleming's fixed that, with the president of the company."

"Ah! then, that is some satisfaction, at any rate. If we could only get out of here, we'd be all right!"

"Do you think you could find Norine?"

"Yes. I know where she is. When Dudley learned out of a room and struck me, it was out of number 53, he came, and I heard a stifled cry. It sounded as if it came from some one whose mouth was tied. Without doubt, 53 is the room the girl is kept in."

"I'm almost beginning to wish Fleming had tackled the job himself!" Isaac sighed.

"Hark!" Hanover exclaimed. "Some one's at the trap, overhead. Stand one side. They may be going to chuck some other unfortunate down."

There was indeed a noise, overhead.

Then, after a moment, there was a rush of air, and a thud on the bottom of the cistern.

Then, the trap was heard to be replaced, overhead.

"Quick! strike a match! There's some one in the same fix as we are!" Hanover cried.

Isaac hastily obeyed, and as the light grew brighter, both men started back, with exclamations of astonishment.

Standing before them, entirely stripped of his disguise, and with his arms folded across his chest, was Fergus Fleming, otherwise Deadwood Dick!

"By thunder! is it you?" Hanover ejaculated.

"I should presume to murmur that it was! Dick declared, grimly. "Do you see anything ethereal or ghost-like about me?"

"You look all sound and human," Hanover replied with a laugh, "but, how in the dickens did you come down here?"

"I came down on the air-line. Surprised to see me, eh?"

"Yes!" both Bill and Isaac assented, in a breath.

"Well, to tell the truth, I'm rather surprised to see myself standing here, right side up with care. And even more surprised to see you, Hanover."

"You thought my word wasn't worth keeping?"

"I thought you were trying to draw me into a snare. But, go on and tell me how you came here."

"We came on the same line that you did," Hanover laughed.

He then went on, and detailed his and Isaac's adventures, since they had entered the Clinker den.

"But, how is it you are here?" Isaac demanded. "I thought it was your intention to call on the police, in case I did not return."

"So it was, but I concluded, first, to endeavor to learn some tidings of your whereabouts. I waited two hours, and then, gave you another hour's grace. But you didn't show up; so I concluded Hanover had gotten you into a trap."

"That's where you didn't know me, Cap!"

"So it appears. Well, I dropped into Clinker's

saloon, and bought a drink, and paid strict attention to my own business. I didn't see anything of Dudley or any one else I knew, and so, after putting down a taste of the rank poison they call whisky, I turned to depart. As I did so, I was pounced upon by half a dozen of the roughs, and about the next thing I fully realized was that I was down here in the darkness."

"Oh! Dudley is wide awake, and on his mettle, to-night!" Bill Hanover declared. "He's got us all in a cage now, and he'll be high cock of the walk."

"I expect so. What sort of a place is this?"

"An old cistern that was built, but never used."

"I have a candle in my pocket that I brought along in case of emergency. We will have some light on the subject."

And a light they soon did have, sufficient to illuminate their close quarters.

Deadwood Dick made a silent survey of the place with his eagle eyes.

"It does look like a pretty tough pen!" he admitted. "Where is this cistern located?"

"It is built in one corner of the cellar, but the bottom of it is considerably deeper than the cellar bottom."

"The walls are bricked up, I presume, and cemented over?"

"Yes."

Dick took a strong-bladed clasp-knife from his pocket, and bored into the cement, until he struck the bricks.

"No use of trying to dig out!" he said, grimly. "Our only way of escape is through the trap above."

"But, how are you going to reach the trap?"

"That can be done, by standing on each other's shoulders."

"I don't allow there's enough circus about any of us to do that."

"Pshaw! A man can do many strange things in a case of necessity. We will try it, and if one of us can get out he can help the others. But, even though we can get out at once, we must remain here until about nine to-morrow, when we will escape, and, if possible, release Norine, without police interference."

"How are you going to judge the time?"

"Oh! before I came here I invested in a Waterbury watch, and stowed it away in my boot leg," and here Dick produced an open-faced watch. "It is now half-past one."

They shortly began the attempt of reaching the trap-door, Dick volunteering to stand as the under man, and holding the young Hebrew upon his shoulders without any trouble.

After several bungling attempts, Hanover managed to gain an erect position on Isaac's shoulders, and thus was able to reach the trap with ease.

But though he pushed with all his might, he could not raise the door.

It was fastened down on the upper side!

CHAPTER XVII.

A QUEER BLOW-OUT.

"It's no use!" Hanover cried, leaping down from his perch. "There's a barrel of whisky, or some other heavy weight on top of the door, and it can't be lifted off from below."

Isaac also dismounted, and the three men stood regarding each other, rather grimly. Deadwood Dick looking the most disappointed of the three.

"Confound it!" he said, "we must get out of here in some way—we must. It is an imperative necessity!"

"Even if we don't, at once, Dudley and the Malone girl can't get the money, can they?" Isaac asked.

"No, but they may make away with the girl out of spite, you see. There is only one chance for us that looks any ways feasible. How thick do you think this wall is, Bill?"

"On the side next to the cellar about two layers of brick, the bricks lengthwise."

"How about the cellar? Is there a way to get up out of that?"

"Yes. There is a stairway that goes up into the kitchen, and a door that opens from the kitchen into the hall."

Dick glanced at his watch.

"Humph! time flies. It is two o'clock already. Does Clinker keep open after midnight?"

"No. The place is watched after that hour, and has to be quiet. Everybody's asleep by this time."

"I hope so. I'm going to take desperate chances of getting out of here, gents. Maybe we'll have a mass of bricks down on us, and maybe not. I think not—the cement will, in a measure, prevent the outer wall from caving in."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to blow a hole through the wall, or, at least, loosen the masonry enough so the bricks can be removed."

"How?"

"Watch and you will see."

He then set to work vigorously with his clasp-knife at boring a hole in the wall.

He was obliged to make several holes through the thick coating of cement before he could strike a seam in the masonry. Once he struck the seam, he proceeded to dig into the mortar.

In a short time he had made a hole in the wall that extended to the second layer of bricks.

"There! so far, so good!" he said, viewing the excavation with satisfaction. "Now for the powder."

"Where you going to get it?" Hanover demanded.

"Here."

And Dick took a box of forty-four caliber cartridges from his boot-leg.

"These will furnish what powder I need."

Spreading a piece of paper on the bottom of the cistern, he seated himself, and proceeded to remove the bullets from the cartridge shells, with his knife.

The rapidity with which he performed the feat proved beyond a doubt that it was not his first experience at that sort of work.

"Are you not afraid the report will arouse the house, even if it does not do us personal injury?" Isaac asked, doubtfully.

"No. I do not anticipate that the blast will make much of a noise, nor even blow a brick out."

By three o'clock Dick had emptied the cartridges of all the powder they contained, and had sufficient for his purpose.

First he rolled up some of the powder into a paper tube, or fuse, and inserted it into the hole. Then he worked in the rest of the powder beside it, as compactly as possible, after which he tightly wadded the remaining space with paper.

The blast was ready for firing.

"Now, then, say your prayers, boys!" Dick warned with a dry laugh. "In about a minute you may be in Kingdom Come!"

"Do you think there is any danger?" Isaac asked, anxiously.

"No. Stand at either side of the fuse, against the wall. If there's any blow-out, it will pass between you, and strike the further wall."

They quickly took the positions as ordered, looking considerably alarmed.

No so with Deadwood Dick; he was as placid as a miner in a rift.

He took the lighted candle fearlessly in his hand, lit the end of the fuse, and stepped quickly to one side.

The next instant there was a flash, a puff of smoke, and a dull report.

A dozen bricks flew out, and across the cistern, striking the opposite side.

That was all.

The report was not loud, and there was little likelihood that it would attract the attention of any one in the building above.

The candle had been blown out.

When they relit it, they found that the way to liberty was almost at hand.

The wall had been severely shattered, and it would be an easy matter for them to remove enough bricks to make an opening of sufficient size to admit them into the cellar.

This was not immediately done.

Instead, Dick blew out the candle, and they laid down to await the proper time for them to work.

No one opened the trap above, and it was therefore supposed that the report had attracted no attention.

The hours dragged slowly by, but at last, on consulting his watch, Dick announced that it was morning—seven o'clock.

"I've been thinking," he said, "that Dudley may take a look at us before he leaves for the insurance office. So we had better replace the bricks, lest our aim be discovered and frustrated."

This was done, and not any too soon, either, for shortly afterward, the trap overhead was removed, and a lantern was lowered partly down into the well.

Above it, was seen the diabolically triumphant face of Delos Dudley.

"Hello! there!" he shouted. "All alive and kicking, are ye?"

"We're not kickers!" Dick responded. "We played our game, and if we lost we're not going to kick about it!"

"That's right. Take your situation with as good grace as possible, for it won't do you a bit of good to kick—not a bit. I've got you just where I want you, my darling detective, and there you'll stay, until I get the insurance, and am safe away from Gotham."

"Will we then be set at liberty?"

"I reckon so, ef ye take an oath never to expose Jack Clinker. You'll have to deal with him, not me."

"What will be done with Norine?"

"Oh! she will be sent back home."

"I hope the insurance company won't pay you!"

Dick said, in a tone of evident regret. "If I had been smart, I would have warned them not to pay the claim."

"But you see you wasn't smart!" Dudley declared, with a chuckle. "Ha! ha! ha! That's a ripe old saying: 'He who laughs last, laughs best!' And you can bet your life we laugh last—Maggie and I. By-by! I'm going after the boodle, now. Maybe I and you won't meet again, but I trust you will always keep me tenderly fresh in your memory."

"Oh! I shall, no doubt!" Dick retorted.

"That's right! Good-by, sonny! I'll set a barrel of whisky on the trap. If you've got muscle enough to lift it off, you can get free."

Then the villain drew up the lantern, closed the trap, and the three friends were left in darkness.

"Now is our time to begin work!" Dick announced. "We may experience some difficulty in getting out, but go we must, and be ready to rescue Norine at nine o'clock."

"What bothers me," spoke up Isaac, "is how are we to get out of the cellar without creating an alarm. Hanover says that the stairs open into the kitchen."

"So they do," Bill said, thoughtfully. "There is a front cellar door, too, where the beer is put down. Should this be unlocked, as it usually is in the early part of the day, we can get out on the street, direct."

"If we can do this we will be all right!" Dick said. "I will then send for a squad of police. Is there any back outlet to Clinker's place?"

"None whatever."

"Supposing you can't make an exit by the front cellar door?" suggested Isaac.

"Then we shall have to go up into the kitchen, and make a rush for the street. When we get outside, you, Bill, run to the police station, and fetch twenty men, in my name. I'll see that no one gets out of Clinker's."

They then began the work of burrowing out of their prison, Isaac holding the candle, and the other two doing the work.

There was no trouble in making an aperture of considerable size, in the first layer of bricks.

But it was different work with the second.

The blast had not materially affected this wall.

But by dint of prying and pushing, one brick was removed, and after that, it was not so hard.

After several bricks had been displaced, a discovery followed.

Beyond was earth!

"As I told you!" Hanover said. "The bottom of the cistern is lower than that of the cellar. We shall have to burrow upward."

It was after eight, before they had the hole in the wall big enough; then they had to tackle the ground, beyond.

Fortunately, they had not far to dig, before an opening was made into the cellar.

This was rapidly enlarged, and by ten minutes to nine, they left the cistern, and stood in the cellar.

It was a large place, running the full length of the building. A great quantity of boxes and barrels were strewn about, but carefully picking their way among them, the three reached the fore part of the cellar which was dimly lighted by a dusty transom.

After listening, they found there was considerable noise in the room above.

Deadwood Dick then tried the outside cellar door, and found to his joy, that it was unfastened.

Raising it a trifle, he took a survey of the surroundings.

There was no one in front of the saloon, and but few people in the vicinity.

In almost less time than it takes to tell it, all three were out of the cellar, and around the nearest corner; then, bidding Isaac and Bill to keep an eye on the den, Dick started off in post-haste for assistance.

On arrival at head-quarters, his application for policemen was promptly responded to, and a sergeant, accompanied by twenty men, went with him.

The descent on Clinker's den was made so suddenly and unexpectedly that the inmates were taken wholly by surprise, and not a person escaped.

Among the arrests were several of considerable importance—old offenders, who had long evaded justice.

Norine was found by Dick, and as soon as possible was put into a carriage and driven away toward the insurance office, accompanied by Dick, Isaac and Bill Hanover.

The latter, however, got out at Broadway.

As they proceeded, Dick briefly narrated to Norine the substance of the plot, and the varied experiences he had passed through in order to rescue her.

Of course she was greatly astonished, but this did not prevent her from being very grateful, and she thanked both Dick and Isaac in warmest terms.

And, in due time, they arrived at the insurance office, to baffle the daring fraud Delos Dudley and Maggie Malone had attempted to perpetrate.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

DELOS DUDLEY and Maggie Malone were visibly excited when they entered the insurance office that morning, but their excitement was born of triumph rather than of fear.

They were sure they had overcome all obstacles in the way of securing the five thousand dollars, and they had made all preparations for leaving the city immediately after getting the money.

As soon as they entered they were invited into the president's private office, where that gentleman sat at a writing-table.

He did not look as pleasant as usual.

"Be seated," he said.

Then to Maggie:

"You are after money, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"Let me see—what case is yours?"

"The Norval case."

"Ah! yes; I remember now. You are Norine Norval?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where do you reside, Miss Norval?"

"I thought all these questions had been answered satisfactorily!" Maggie said, petulantly.

"You will please answer me!" the president said, sternly.

"Well, I reside in Philadelphia."

"Your brother died in this city?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where at?"

"At the residence of Mr. Dudley here, number 2—Hester street."

"Was buried—"

"In Long Island Cemetery."

"How old are you, Miss Norval?"

"Eighteen, sir."

"Ah! Then I suppose you are aware that, being a minor, you are not eligible to receive the insurance?"

Both Dudley and Maggie looked thunderstruck.

The president went on:

"No; we could not legally pay you the money until a guardian was appointed over you."

"This is all nonsense!" Dudley cried, angrily. "The young lady is without parents, and is old enough to manage her own affairs!"

"From what I have heard about her, it would seem so!" the president said, dryly. "However, I can't pay her. I will see what Mr. Fleming says."

He touched a call-bell, twice.

The door of an outer office opened, and three policemen filed into the room; while, simultaneously, the door of an inner office opened, and Deadwood Dick led the real Norine Norval into the room.

Both Dudley and Maggie sprung to their feet, with cries of baffled rage.

Before they could do any harm, however, they were in the grasp of the officers, and handcuffed.

"You will observe, friend Dudley," remarked Deadwood Dick, coolly, "that your jig's up, and your game lost. You played it well, and but for me, would have won it, without doubt. Now, however, you can have a rest from plotting, for a while, for you know, he who laughs last laughs best!"

Dudley swore roundly, but that's all the good it did him. His game was up, indeed.

What shall we add, in conclusion?

Dudley and Maggie Malone were taken to the Tombs.

As there were other criminal charges against them besides the attempted fraud, the insurance company did not push their charge, but allowed the law to deal with them on other and more serious crimes, and they received severe sentences.

Indictments are waiting their release from prison, however, and it is doubtful if they breathe the air of freedom for many years to come.

The company bestowed upon Fergus Fleming a large reward, which he divided with Isaac, as promised.

He also told so favorable a story of Isaac to Nathan Rosenthal, that the pawnbroker sent for Isaac to come back to the bosom of his family.

But, Isaac didn't go!

In Norine Norval he saw a girl much to his liking, and he formed Norine's escort back to the Quaker City, where he announced his intention to make his home.

How it will all turn out, I do not know, but I do know Isaac is in business for himself, and doing well, and, more than that, he is Norine's steady company, and a most exemplary young man.

Clinker and the most of his gang got sentenced, after that raid and arrest, and the den is no more.

Wallace Norval will soon be out of jail, and, it is to be hoped, will lead a better life than in the past.

Bill Hanover's reformation was genuine, and he is daily growing in popularity with the confidence of those who know him.

As for Deadwood Dick, he concluded that he had seen about all of New York he wanted, and hearing of a new mining excitement in the West, he soon set out on his return toward the land of the setting sun!

THE END.

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